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THE

# Story of my Career.

**IN PRESS.**

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**GEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES,**

**BY THE LATE**

**PROFESSOR CARL RITTER,**

**OF BERLIN.**

**Translated from the original German,**

**WITH A**

**SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,**

**BY**

**WILLIAM LEONHARD GAGE.**

**With a fine Portrait of the Author.**

PROF. ARNOLD GUYOT, the eminent physicist, and author of the popular work, "The Earth and Man," in speaking of distinguished scientific men, says:—  
"HUMBOLDT, RITTER AND STEPHENS are the three great minds who have breathed a new life into the science of the physical and moral world. The scientific life of the author opened under the full radiance of the light they spread around them, and it is with a sentiment of filial piety that he delights to recall this connection and to render to them his public homage."

THE  
STORY OF MY CAREER,

AS

• STUDENT AT FREIBERG AND JENA.

AND AS

Professor at Halle, Breslau and Berlin.

WITH

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF GOETHE, SCHILLER, SCHELLING,  
SCHLEIERMACHER, FICHTE, NOVALIS, SCHLEGEL,  
NEANDER, AND OTHERS.

BY

HEINRICH STEFFENS.

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM LEONARD GAGE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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HEINRICH STEFFENS was born at Stavanger, in Norway, the second day of May, 1773. He spent but a few years in his native country, and while he was a mere child his parents removed to Copenhagen, which became the home of his youth. He studied in the universities of Copenhagen and of Kiel, and became a licensed lecturer in the latter before reaching the age of twenty-five. He manifested very early a love for a certain class of metaphysical studies, — that which builds on a basis of physical science a lofty though rather slight and unsubstantial superstructure of sentiment. Steffens had a remarkable leaning to the philosophy of religion, and though his was by no means a logical mind, nor one which enjoyed logical processes, yet he loved those long and vague meditations on the attributes of the Deity in which many of the German scholars indulge. He came mainly under the influence of Spinoza, and passed at a later period under that of Jacobi, Kant, and Schelling. In his mature years the last named was his master without a rival;

but Spinoza was the first great genius who awoke the powers of Steffens, and shaped his mind, and gave direction to his aims. The young man was fortunate in his acquaintanceships, for Hensler of Kiel, Rist and Schimmelmann, all were drawn to him, and did what they could to develop his faculties. Steffens was an admirer of the English literature, and Shakspeare was the poet whom he most desired to comprehend. He never was master of our language, and what he read of our literature had to come to him in translations, and no good version of Shakspeare had then been made. After the verdict which has been silently passed upon Young's *Night Thoughts*, it is amusing to see how he struggled to get at the meaning of that ponderous and heavy performance, and attributed his failure to the profundity rather than to the real emptiness of the verbose mass. He tried to fathom Sterne's humor, but could not reach the bottom of it, and the real power of Tristam Shandy was always hid from him. Yet, Steffens had a good natural taste for the humorous, and a light play of mirth tinged the most of his ordinary conversation. His leading quality, however, was his vivacity, which was extraordinary, and which never died out, even in the advanced old age to which he lived. He was known as the "genial Steffens," and always wore an air of benignity mingled with nobleness. Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, noticed this, and alludes to it in his

“European Celebrities,” where the countenance of Professor Steffens is compared to that of Dr. Nott, of Union College, although, by a mistake in printing, the name is written Stephens, and might easily pass without being recognized as that of the physicist Steffens.

The man whose autobiography is given in the following pages has been brought a number of times before the reading public of this country and of England, but never excepting in a brief and unsatisfactory manner. In the letters of Humboldt, which were put in the possession of Varnhagen von Ense, and published by Ludmilla Assing, a year or two since, is one from the king of Denmark to Humboldt, in which his majesty expresses himself in terms of great pride in the reputation of the Danish professor resident in Berlin, though Humboldt indulges in one of those ungenerous flings at Steffens, so many of which are found in that unfortunate book, and which have done so much to tarnish the fair fame of him whom we hardly invested with the ordinary weaknesses of humanity.

But the most emphatic testimony to the value of Steffens's scientific career is to be found in a book of wide reputation, Guyot's “Earth and Man.” He not only refers in the body of that work to Steffens, but in the preface he alludes to him and to Ritter as the two men to whom he was the most indebted for the interest which he has displayed in Physical

Geography, and the scientific training which has directed all his researches in this new branch of knowledge. I read that passage in Guyot's work years ago, just after its publication, and while I was a student at Cambridge. I knew nothing of Ritter and nothing of Steffens, but the enthusiastic devotion of their interpreter to their genius kindled an interest in my own mind which led, after the lapse of five years, to my enrolling myself as a pupil of Ritter, at Berlin, and to the translating, still five years later, a selection<sup>1</sup> from the voluminous works of the former, and the preparation of the work now before my readers.

The autobiography of Steffens, written in his old age, and called *Was ich erlebte*, or The Story of my Life, and published in Breslau some years since, is very voluminous and diffuse. Indeed, it would be perfectly correct to say that it is tedious to a degree. It would be so to a German, it is doubly so to an American or an Englishman. It is in ten volumes, and covers four thousand pages. It is dictated in all the garrulosity of old age. It is not written with a discriminating appreciation of what men wish to know, and the story of his childhood, and the accounts of his relatives and of his college friends, are just as full as the allusions to

<sup>1</sup> Geographical Studies. From the German of Professor Carl Ritter. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. (In press.)

the great men and the great events of his time. It made my task, as a whole, easier, for it made the labor of rejecting the useless parts a light one, and only subjected me to the pains of wading through thousands of trifling and worthless pages. Yet there were more than "the four grains in two bushels of chaff," and when I had found them, unlike the ideas of Gratiano, they were worth the search. Steffens's vivacity is reproduced in the pages of his autobiography, and perhaps nowhere in the rich treasury of German literary memoirs is to be found a gallery of portraits so graphic and yet so faithful as that which is opened in this work to American readers.

I have passed over the first three volumes without drawing a word from them, excepting the facts which are stated in the first pages of this Introduction. The life of Steffens begins to be interesting when, at the age of twenty-five, and provided by Count Schimmelmann, so well and favorably known from the letters of Niebuhr, with a stipend from the Danish treasury to defray his travelling expenses, the young philosopher enters Germany, the future theatre of his career. Schimmelmann was then minister of finance in Denmark, and Steffens had already gained his favor, and was about to enter upon the enjoyment of it. With the opening of the fourth volume, where Steffens is seen passing into Germany, my real task of collating and translating begins.

In executing this work I have tried to reproduce the easy, flowing style in which Steffens wrote, and to draw out those passages, and those only, which I have judged would most interest cultivated readers who take an interest in the men and in the literature of Germany. The ninth and tenth chapters, on Steffens's Military Career, I find already translated, and so incorporate at second hand.

W. L. G.

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THE

# STORY OF MY CAREER.

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## CHAPTER I.

STEFFENS ENTERS GERMANY — JOURNEY THROUGH THE HARTZ — FOOT JOURNEY TO JENA — ERFURT AND ITS ATTRACTIVE LADIES — JENA — LIFE IN JENA — STUDENT LIFE IN JENA — FOOT JOURNEY THROUGH THE THURINGIAN FOREST — FIRST EXPERIENCE IN BUYING A HORSE — ASPECTS OF GERMAN CHARACTER — THE LIFE OF GERMAN MINERS — KANT, FICHTE AND SCHELLING — FICHTE'S METAPHYSICS — RETURN TO JENA.

My long-cherished wish now approached its fulfilment, and Europe lay before me. Yet, while every country in it was attractive to me, Germany was the one nearest to my heart and claimed my first attention. Free from care, happy and full of hope, I was now in a condition to turn my steps whichever way I would. As a naturalist, or rather as a mineralogist, I had received a certain sum for travelling expenses from my government, but a deep and real interest in my scientific pursuits filled me. Philosophical speculation was not what would be called my specialty; I would not be a stranger to this department, but it did not meet all the de-

mands of my being. I had a kind of premonition of the nature of the epoch which was just opening in all directions. I saw old authorities losing their value, and I comprehended quite well that on one side Goethe and on the other Philosophy were setting all the scientific elements into a ferment. I saw that I must be a man of the new time just opening. I had attempted much, and in almost all departments of human knowledge I had sought to attain clear views. What Spinoza had been to me I have already stated,—the casket which contained all the riches that the future seemed to hold in store for me. Fichte had taught me that the glory of man's self-determining will finds its only worthy equipoise, and, indeed, its more than equivalent, in the inward activity of the mind itself. But it was to be Schelling who should transfer me to a new stand-point, one which should give an interpretation to the whole previous course of my life from childhood up. A new existence seemed to be opening to me, and I addressed myself to the task of grouping what is deepest and noblest in knowledge, and of comprehending the harmony which exists between all the conflicting elements of nature. But, full of joy as this rich future made me, it did not hinder me from giving myself unreservedly to the delight of the present.

It is not easy to conceive how imposing to the eye of a North European are the mental conflicts which are going forward in the heart of the continent. The distant murmurs have an enchanting tone in his ear, and every name which comes to

him seems surrounded with a halo of glory. The petty animosities, the literary and scientific squabbles, are lost in the great whole, and the scholars of Europe are elevated in his eyes into high-priests of knowledge. A cultivated German can hardly visit Italy or Greece or the East with more interest than I felt in approaching Germany. What they seek is a dead Past, which must be strange and distant even were they to live in its very midst. I was looking for a glorious Future in which I might live and have a share,—a future which should absorb the entire activities of my nature. It would kindle my every power, and unfold to me, as to the world, a new and bright era.

As we approached Brunswick, and the beautiful environs of the city began to appear, I tried to descry away beyond the buildings the outlines of the Hartz Mountains. My longing for mountainous scenery had been much increased by my recent sojourn in Norway. We stopped at the Blue Angel Inn, which had pleasant associations for me in connection with the author Knigge. But when we left Brunswick, as we journeyed in the fairest weather and through the most delightful scenery, and in the neighborhood discerned Wolfenbüttel, and later the towers of Halberstadt, and soon after passed Quedlinburg, which, although it did not come in sight, yet was not far away, well-known names and old recollections came thronging in upon me, and a bright sun within me seemed to emulate the outer one in giving a charm to the whole landscape. All the chords of my being resounded in harmony. Les-

sing had lived in Wolfenbüttel, and Gleim's house at Halberstadt had been a favorite resort of almost all the leading poets of the time. Götze had lived his busy, calm, retired, naturalist's life in Quedlinburg, and his name brought a charm of nameless but real interest upon the whole village. I saw Lessing in his library, revolving great thoughts on the past, and at last giving expression to them with his matchless skill. And from Halberstadt rung out the songs like those which once sounded from the Wartburg. Götze, and with him Rösel, Gleichen, Schöfer, strode through the fields, lost themselves in the forests, made observations in the gardens, while the blossoms reached out to them as to old friends, and the cheerful insects seemed to leap from the grass to bid them welcome. Thus was the whole district peopled to my imagination, and almost seemed to me like classic ground. In this happy frame of mind, in which everything outward as well as inward united to make me cheerful, I passed a day never to be forgotten. It was about midnight, dark and late, when we arrived at Blankenburg. •

The Hartz Mountains, through whose northern spurs we were now passing, I have since traversed many times in all directions; and there are so many pleasant associations connected with those journeys, that the Hartz Mountains, small as they are, fill quite a prominent place in my life. They have had to serve me as an example of mountain chains in general, and from them I have been compelled to draw most of my geognostical theories and illustra-

tions. The spurs towards the north, east, and south, are indeed charming, often imposing.

I think with delight on that fair summer's day when we wandered on foot through the woods at the base of the Hartz, discovered Wernigerode and the bold Castle of the Mountain, visited the steep rocks in the Ilsethal, and climbed the next day to the ruins of Hartzburg. All was beautiful; man, landscape, sunshine, air, forest, and mountains, combined to throw us into the happiest of moods. We had been told that the way to the Brocken through the Ilsethal was the most difficult, and so we selected it for that very reason; but what its difficulties were we never could discover. Ascending by this route, the Brocken in its solitude had a look which was really imposing. We spent the night in a mean little hut on Heinrichshöhe, and in the twilight the Brocken reminded me somewhat of the Norway mountains, yet the German landscape was so lovely that the difference in favor of the Hartz scenery was immense. That night was to me one of perfect delight. My companion was a dear friend, a thorough proficient in botany, and so I had in his accurate knowledge a source of happiness which I had not enjoyed when journeying through my own country, and obliged to depend wholly upon my own attainments.

The view of the Hartz from the Brocken is in no way imposing. The neighboring heights have no attractive features; it is only the distant prospect and the general harmony of the whole picture that give it its fame. Nine times I have ascended the

Brocken from different directions. Once I had the good fortune to see the famous Spectre from the Tower of the Brocken House. I have often admired the shadows which played over the level land at the base, when the sun went down, as one of the most attractive features of the landscape. But at evening there arises almost always a mist which obscures everything. Yet at my first visit the atmosphere was entirely clear. The shadows extended eastward as far as the horizon, and even prolonged themselves into the distant sky, so that the summit of the mountain, the Brocken House, the Tower, and we, the wondering observers, swam as shadows in the air.

The ancient solitude of the Hartz has wholly passed away. For the witches there no longer remains a place. Ladies and gentlemen riding, travellers of all kinds, from a distance as well as from the neighborhood, singing journeymen and shouting students, met us whenever we turned in to visit shaded dells and desolate ravines. Where we expected the spirits of the mountains, we encountered servant-girls, and the throng of people threatened to wear smooth even the craggy heights themselves.

And yet I must confess that even this cheerful gathering-place of so many, who all feel happy, has its own peculiar charm. Even nature seems subordinate to life, when mountain chains share a part in the merriment of men. Where I had seen them in the cold North, they commune silently among themselves, and the human voice is lost in their oppressive stillness.

When we came back to Blankenburg I could not repress the desire to go alone and on foot to Jena. I took a shirt in one pocket, a map in the other; even the thought that I might lose my way had something attractive for me. My outside garment was a light kerseymere overcoat. In my hand I carried a long, clay pipe. So, towards evening, without having wandered at all out of my way, I came to Stolberg. I stepped into a tavern, which seemed fitted up for travellers by the coach. The landlady received me rather coolly, and when I asked for some supper she gave me a seat in the corner of the room, and placed before me some tripe soup. This whole proceeding seemed singular, and threw me into great perplexity how to act. I thought of the Norwegian peasants, who would have considered an unwillingness to partake of food that they might offer a personal offence to themselves, and yet, hungry as I was, I could not bring myself to taste of the vile dish. The landlady noticed my perplexity; but, instead of feeling hurt, she began to look upon me with new favor. "Ah," said she, "the gentleman is probably not used to such fare." I then received something better. The best chamber in the house was put at my disposal, and I enjoyed the luxury of a perfectly clean bed. On the next day, I passed through the whole of the charming valley to Rottleberode, and that walk remains in my memory as one of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed. I wholly forgot that I was on a journey. I spent a great part of the day in the valley. I lived over again the days of my childhood. I studied all the

flowers I met, and was even pleased to fall in with new ones which reminded me that I was no longer in my native land. I pursued dragon-flies and linnets, or rested by the side of a swiftly-running, shaded brook. I could scarcely tear myself from the valley; steep banks on both sides shut it closely in. It seemed to me as if one of the fair landscapes of Denmark lay before me, with its back-ground of Scandinavian mountains.

The rest of the journey I do not remember so well. Sonderhausen, where I spent a night, seemed a pleasant village; Erfurt I distinctly remember. I stopped at the "Roman Emperor;" and at this house, as elsewhere on the whole journey, I was received without the exhibition of a prying curiosity. This fine old German town made a very agreeable impression upon me. I visited the great bell in Dalberg's palace.

I do not know whether Erfurt is really celebrated for pretty girls; I only know that the matrons and the maidens whom I saw were charming. I had had enough of foot-journeying, and was going to take the stage-coach to Weimar. Having nothing to do, I looked out upon the square in front of the hotel. By good fortune I saw three or four ladies of the burgher class, who attracted my attention by their genteel figures, fair skins, and fine features. The costume of the Saxon ladies, the mantle lightly thrown over the shoulders, and the graceful caps, may have contributed to render them attractive in my sight. I turned to the landlord and cancelled my order for the stage, and declared that I

would spend some days in Erfurt, taking no pains to conceal my reason. He smiled, and when I asked him if he would not introduce me during my stay to some families where these angels lived, he promised his kind help. In the afternoon he took me to a garden, and introduced me to some families, who were drinking tea there, as a Norwegian. I had expressly stipulated that these should be none of the learned classes, for on this journey I would bid a temporary adieu to all learning.

Here I at first experienced an advantage which has since stood me in great service when introduced to strangers. It has always been a whim of mine never to take letters of introduction with me. When I went to Germany I had none, and I was foolish enough to believe that my own bearing would be my best passport. But I soon found that what called attention to me was not my bearing, but my birthplace. Even at the hotel the landlord looked at me with great astonishment when I announced myself as a Norwegian. And in the families, too, the same cause procured me much consideration. People had fanciful conceptions of my native land in the remote North. Norway was then little visited ; it lay on one side of the great course of travel, and a journey thither was regarded in almost the same light as one to the coasts of Asia or Africa. And so here in Erfurt my foreign extraction awakened much interest. My faint and indistinct pronunciation and abundant errors in German were a source of great amusement. Many

agreeable days I passed in Erfurt, and then in the happiest of moods took the coach for Jena.

So in this place I had arrived at last, and what had driven me thither was so clear in my mind that Jena almost seemed the goal of my journey. I indeed remembered that in my own country I was regarded as a mineralogist, and that it was expected of me that I should hasten directly to Freiberg to study in the famous school of mineralogy, of which Werner was then at the head. But it would have been impossible for me to pass by the real centre of intellectual life in Germany. The little city of Jena in its lovely valley was very attractive, and after a few days I felt quite at home.

I did not, indeed, intend to spend the summer months before me in Jena. I reserved these for a geological tour in the Thuringian forest, and what drew me specially in that direction was Heim's work upon the mineralogy of that district, which would serve me as an instructive companion at every step. I was not one of those young men who have the boldness to crowd themselves without any reserve upon distinguished scholars. To visit Goethe, in Weimar, did not occur to me, interesting as it would have been to have approached him. I left it to time and to circumstances, and reckoned safely upon these that they would ultimately bring me into contact with him. I had already heard that Schelling had received a call to Jena as Professor Extraordinarius. His arrival was expected in the autumn.

I alighted at the Black Bear, and on the evening

of my arrival I experienced a touch of the exceeding roughness of the Jena students.

A city in which one proposes to tarry for a little while, and which may even have some relation to our future career, has a certain impressive aspect at the outset. It seems to inclose even the secret of our destiny. At the hotel I found my friend, who had arrived some days before me. He found a great deal of fault with the bad fare, which in truth for us men of the North, who were used to hearty and nourishing food, seemed execrable. We entertained each other with much lively talk, for we had been separated some time, and had enough to tell of. It grew dark. I looked out into the neighborhood so strange to me, and a restless suspicion of what was to come ran through my mind. Then we heard in the distance a loud shouting like the voices of a number of men, and nearer and nearer they seemed to come. Lights had been brought shortly before, and, as the uproar was close upon us, a servant burst in to warn us to extinguish them. We asked, with curiosity, why, and what the shouting mob wanted. We suspected, indeed, that it was students. The servant told us that they were on their way to the house of Professor A., who was unpopular with them,—I know not why,—to salute him with their *Pereat*, or college damnation. The cry of some hundred students grew plainer and plainer. “Out with lights” was called, and just then we heard the panes of glass clatter, when the warning was not quickly enough complied with. I confess that this circumstance, occurring so soon after my

arrival, filled me with a kind of gloom. It was not such things as this that had called me to Jena; these were not the voices which I wished and expected to hear, and my first night was a sad one.

I had the caprice to try to live as frugally as a Jena student, and made a week's experiment of it. But I lost flesh visibly. The landlord understood the art of treating the flesh of an old ox or ram with such exquisite skill that all the flavor of the meat disappeared, and only the woody fibre remained. As I could not drink, like a true German student, eight or nine bottles of lager every day, I grew very hungry, and had to provide for myself. Yet I did not give up my purpose of studying critically German student life. In Dorndorf there was appointed a great *commerce* or carouse. Hundreds of students collected themselves in the halls of the hotel, arrayed in their well-known bizarre costume. I mingled among them. Some even of the wildest came up to me and asked me to drink brotherhood with them. I did not tarry long. It was a pleasant day, the country was charming; I took a long walk to Hamburg, and when I returned to Dorndorf the commerce was in full glow. I heard the frightful shouting, the wild revelry, and hurried on with a kind of horror. I had reason afterwards to rue this first visit. The very next day I was waited upon by some wild Westphalians in leather trousers, short jackets, and cannon-like boots, in the right one of which was the handkerchief, in the left the pipe, while a tobacco-pouch hung at a button-hole; these were my brothers of yesterday. They filled their

pipes with their vile tobacco, threw themselves upon the sofa, and called for beer. Their visit brought me almost to despair; they remained some hours, and I had to feign an engagement to get away. I hastened to Gries, in order to recount my foolish adventure and its unfortunate fruits. He very properly gave me a good chiding, and told me that I must now bear with patience what could not be obviated. Only one resource remained to me. I left Jena, and took a foot journey through the Thuringian forest.

Five or six weeks I spent in this tour, pursuing the most of my journey without any companion. There was some fear of meeting robbers in those times, but with the precautions which I took I encountered no attack. The whole of my journey was rich in adventures of a small kind; rich, too, in observations of life, and in additions to my knowledge. I came nearer to the people, and learned to love and prize them. I came in contact with the most varied persons, and chimed in with the peculiar tone of each. Meanwhile I applied myself closely to my own science. I became acquainted with the structure of the Thuringian Mountains, the position of the strata, and sought to bring my observations into relation with those which I had elsewhere made. I did not seek to come into contact with learned people, excepting Heim, who could direct my studies; it was foresters and miners with whom I had to do. The whole journey was one of enjoyment. My mind was interested in my work, my system free from disease. Indeed, I have never

been in better health than when, in the midst of great activity, I have had to live in a very moderate way. When in the solitary mountains I have had nothing more choice than eggs, sausages, and bacon, with water to drink, I have felt so thoroughly well, so elastic in spirit, so light in limb, that I still look back with joy to those days of vigor and hearty sympathy with life. I was in love with the present; and those dark problems which I had left at Jena for future solution looked foggy and forbidding.

I must narrate one circumstance which reminds me forcibly of Gil Blas. I found the constant journeying on foot very tedious, particularly when I was leaving mile after mile behind me in passing through uninteresting districts in order to reach places which had value to me. The most disagreeable thing was the heat at noon. Fatigue, the warm sun, often hunger, troubled me to such an extent as to quite cloud the pleasures of my journey, and make my occupation seem mean and forbidding.

I often fell in with merchants travelling on horseback, and I almost envied them their advantages. If I only had a horse, I said to myself; then the heat might blaze away and I would not complain; and even if the first expense might be considerable, yet it cannot be so very great a sum. I can take good care of my horse, and then sell him again. When at last I made my resolve there was no lack of opportunities to carry it into effect. A Saalfeld mountaineer gave me the benefit of his advice. I found an admirable horse, and bought him at what

I have no doubt was a good bargain. But now began new troubles. When I alighted at a country tavern I had first to care for my horse ; but that was a very small matter. When, after leaving a number of miles behind me, I reached an important field of observation, I often had to leave my horse for a whole day at a stable, while I rambled through the mountains on foot. Often it would have been convenient to have continued my wanderings some distance on these branch excursions, but round I must turn and traverse again my old track because of my horse, and so my ease cost me dear. Not seldom, in my complete ignorance of such matters, I over-worked the poor creature. On one pleasant summer evening, as I was riding leisurely along, wanting to enjoy the scenery and beautiful weather, something suddenly seemed to ail the horse. All my happiness vanished at once. I was full of anxiety. I knew nothing of what was to be done in such cases. When at last I reached a village, and the horse was led into a stable, I looked at it behind and before, but could see nothing, and went anxiously into the house. Shortly after appeared the landlord. "On that horse you can travel no further," said he. "He has hurt himself, and will be good for nothing if you do not call in a horse-doctor and let him rest for some days." My worst fears were realized, and I asked the good man for advice. "I can remain here under no conditions," said I. Thereupon he began to pour out a volume of assurances that he would treat me honorably and the like ; but the next morning I rode off on my sorry nag. I

will give him good fare, said I to myself, and he will soon recover. But it soon appeared that the horse was really lame. At last he stopped. I, an unskillful rider, could not move him from the spot. I was compelled to dismount, and not only to drag myself along, but also my horse. I thanked God when an opportunity occurred, on the third day, to sell my horse for a third of the sum which I paid for him. So I stood again on my own sound feet, and really felt myself fortunate to be there, although the loss of so much money compelled me to very much shorten my tour.

I had now given myself for some time to the scenery of Germany, for which I had yearned from my earliest childhood. I had hurried through Weimar, so full of interest to me; had found Jena as good as empty for my purposes. I had approached no one of the eminent men whose names were sacred in my ear, but I had seen much. I had entered upon a world which was new to me. The winning openness with which the Germans greet strangers, the confidence which they yield to them, the simplicity of the peasantry as they communicate their joys and sorrows, and tell of the injuries even which have been done to them, made me soon feel at home among them. I had seen them in many conditions. I had become acquainted with the cities and villages and charming landscapes of this happy land. Cheerful in my eye were the small residences or homes of the minor German princes Rudolstadt and Meiningen, Hildburghausen and Coburg, Bamberg and Wurtzburg. The castles, with their great

gardens, and the houses of the court servants, with their attractive surroundings, had for me a most winning look. The relation of the people to the princes was beautiful; in the eye of a foreigner there was that mutual confidence and patriarchal aspect of life which drew largely on my sympathies.

But I had enlarged my circle of interest in other directions, and especially had become much drawn to the life of the miners, whose occupation and manners were so constantly under my eye as I pursued my mineralogical investigations. I soon learned to prize their practical efficiency. When, during my wanderings into the most lonely districts, the water-courses were my guide, and led me to a cabin or to an opened mineral vein, where I had to creep through the narrow passage-ways, the slightest circumstances grew important, and the structure of the mountain, the object of my inquiries, stood in the closest relation with the task which the practical miner had to perform. Here I first learned with what difficulties man has to contend when he opens the earth to bring forth its hidden treasures; how opposing elements stand in his way; how now the friable falling rock, now the waters streaming up from below, can destroy the work of many years; how the miner must watch with uninterrupted anxiety every outbreak of those hostile forces with which he battles, in order to turn them to his own profit, and make his adversaries his helpers.

Indeed, there is scarcely any practical service of life which makes such constant demands upon judgment and care as that of the miner; and I, com-

pletely ignorant of this manner of life, and looking at it for the first time, could only wonder at the activity which amidst such obstacles could work with singleness towards its mark. The man who busies himself merely in his own chamber, who loses himself in abstract principles of thought, is only too much inclined to undervalue practical life. From my own childhood up I had thought of practical things as at a distance. I had looked at them more in the light of poetry and fancy than reality; but now the most trivial matters grew interesting, and I tried to bring them into living relation with my previous speculations. I look back to those days as a period of calm enjoyment. The past lay like a smiling landscape in my view; the present calm, peaceful, and indescribably attractive. The friendly attentions paid to me, the magnificent German language which I was always hearing, the frankness of fellow-tourists, all warmed my soul with kindness and with love, caused my heart to beat with new joy, and made the future look bright and beautiful.

As I wandered along I thought; and the more I thought the more plainly I saw that the dawn of a new scientific era was breaking, and that I must give myself wholly to the next age rather than the past. Kant broke upon me suddenly as the representative man of the time; the limits which he imposed upon the extent of our knowledge satisfied me. I began to see that he must constitute a necessary member, an unavoidable step in the progress of the human mind. Natural science had so much engrossed me that I could not be unacquainted with

the power of the appeal which it makes to the senses, and upon which it lays such authoritative stress. I perceived it as a fact that the Kantian categories in their treatment of space must find their perfect expression in the exact language of mathematics. But even under these limitations, dealing as they did with only the outer realities of the world of sense, that which they excluded, the spiritual, was brought out with new distinctness, and the more determinedly Kant tried to waive such problems the more strongly did they press themselves upon the consideration, and I saw very plainly that Schelling as well as Fichte would pass from Kant, and through the path which he had opened, to a higher philosophy. So it seemed to me very important to study him. I believed that the unsatisfactoriness of my studies hitherto lay in the fact that I had not begun with him in laying the foundations of my intellectual development. I longed for his writings, I wanted to enter upon a systematic course of training, and I was cheered with the thought that things which were dark to me would be cleared up, and that I should feel through my whole future life the influence of this new philosophy. I longed to make the acquaintance of the men whom I should soon see in Jena. Fichte had, indeed, been there some time, but I had purposely shunned meeting him. The sudden turn of all my affairs, the mass of new observations which I had made, and the power which these had exerted upon me, had thrown my life into temporary confusion, and I had not yet wished to meet face to face

the man whom I regarded as the mightiest intellect and the profoundest speculator of the age. I had wanted to wait till my thoughts were again centred, and my life ready to flow in a new and unbroken channel.

In Kiel, I had busied myself in metaphysics, but I had not fully compassed it; now, however, I applied myself to it with assiduity and with an intentness which I had not known since I studied the ethics of Spinoza. Fichte's wonderful dialectic power, that monologue of his which presents the Ego profoundly communing with itself, that representation of Feeling as the final issue of this inward communion which first sought to establish what Kant had empirically conjectured, suddenly gave me light on a subject on which I had thought much, namely, the consecutive development which goes on in the evolution of ideas. Fichte's language was at first unintelligible to me, but after I found that the establishment of the simple idea of self, the Ego, was the corner-stone of his system of metaphysics, I discovered that its study demanded a power of persistent abstraction which was not very difficult to me to attain, and in which I delighted much when I had attained it. To make the personal acquaintance of Fichte at this point was very important. The limitation of the Ego, the central figure of his philosophy, was in no way clear to me from the mere study of his works.

It was wonderful with what feelings I looked at the mountains, when, as it were, out of another heaven, the sun shone into my chamber, and, as if

transplanted to another world, the trees murmured, and the birds sung, when I returned to consciousness again after the study of Fichte, and looked out again upon the face of nature. It was like the greeting of a friend after a long absence, a friend whom I had known and loved under very different circumstances from those in which I now was.

But besides Fichte, I hoped to meet, on my return to Jena, A. W. Schlegel and Schelling. The coming into contact with such men, with Goethe close by, promised me a future whose worth I could not overrate. I left the solitudes of the mountains and hastened to Jena.

## CHAPTER II.

FIRST VIEW OF SCHELLING — FICHTE IN THE LECTURE-ROOM — LIFE IN JENA IN ITS GOLDEN TIME — SCHELLING — INTERVIEW WITH GOETHE — STEFFENS'S VISIT TO GOETHE — SCHILLER COMPARED WITH GOETHE — FIRST REPRESENTATION OF SCHILLER'S WALLLENSTEIN — STEFFENS'S JUDGMENT OF WALLENSTEIN — UNITY AMONG THE SCHOLARS OF JENA — STEFFENS'S LOVE OF THE FINE ARTS — JACOBI'S FAMOUS LETTER — SPIRIT OF CRITICISM AT JENA.

A. W. SCHLEGEL had now come to Jena with his highly-gifted wife, and also Schelling, who was to deliver a trial lecture in the great hall of the university. He had just come from Leipsic, and was recovering from severe illness. Professors and students were mingled together in his auditory. Schelling ascended to his chair. He had a youthful countenance; he was two years younger than I, and now the first of the men of eminence whose acquaintance I was eager to make. He had an air of decision, I might say, a half-defiant look, broad shoulders, the temples wide apart, the brow high, the countenance expressive of energy, the nose a little inclined upwards, and in his large, clear eyes lay a mighty power. When he began to speak he seemed constrained only a few moments. The subject of his lecture was one which then absorbed his whole soul. He spoke of the idea of a philosophy

of nature, of the need of embracing nature in her unity, of the light which would be thrown upon all subjects when philosophers should begin their speculations at the stand-point of the unity of nature. He carried me completely away, and the following day I hastened to visit him. Galvanism then was attracting the attention of all naturalists; the great mystery which unites electricity with it under the law of a higher unity was then just coming under study. I, too, was deeply interested in it. Schelling received me not merely in a friendly, but in a most hearty way. I was the first professed naturalist who came to his views without halting and without reservation. Among men of my walk he had found only antagonists, and such, too, as were really unable to comprehend him.

His conversational manner was charming. I was familiar with his writings, I coincided almost entirely with his views, and I anticipated from him and his efforts great changes in all natural science. I could not prolong my visit,—the young teacher was busy with his lectures. But the few moments which I spent with him were so delightful that in my memory they expanded into hours. Through my entire harmony of views with him I gained a certain kind of confidence, which might almost be called boldness. True, he was younger than I, but he was sustained by a powerful nature, was trained among the most favorable circumstances, had early attained to a great reputation, and stood as a haughty adversary over against the whole power.

less horde, whose leaders, timid and crouching, shrank back in fear.

I was much interested at this time in the opening genius of Franz Baader, whose contributions to metaphysics had been printed even earlier than Schelling's writings on the philosophy of nature; but Baader rose out of the dark clouds of mysticism; Schelling, on the contrary, from the clearer light of scientific knowledge. The night of mysticism received what light it had from distant stars, which only could shine in the darkness, but could not illumine our path. But the sun of an older philosophy, which set in the time of Grecian wisdom, arose again with Schelling, promising a bright and beautiful day. On this clear morning I awoke, full of animation and spirit, ready to give myself, without reserve or constraint, into the guidance of this young man, to lose myself in him.

After my personal interview with Schelling, I went to hear Fichte lecture, who was just commencing his course on the Constitution of Man. His short, thick figure, with its sharp, authoritative eyes, struck me with an imposing effect when I saw him for the first time. His style of speech was cutting as a knife; his sentences fell like the stroke from a razor. Already acquainted with even the weaknesses of his pupils, he sought in every way to make himself intelligible to them. He took all possible pains to substantiate what he said by proof; but yet he had a certain authoritative air, as if he would remove every doubt by a command, to which unhesitating obedience should be paid. "Gentle-

men," said he, "withdraw within yourselves; enter into your own mind; we are now not dealing with anything outward,—purely with ourselves."

The hearers, thus bidden, really seemed to withdraw into their own minds. Some changed their position and straightened themselves up; others bowed themselves over and closed their eyes. All waited with great eagerness to see what should come next. "Gentlemen," continued Fichte, "let your thought be the wall." I could see that the hearers set their minds most intently upon the wall, and everything seemed favorable thus far. "Have you thought—the wall?" asked Fichte. "Now, then, gentlemen, let your thought be *that* that thought the wall." It was curious to see what confusion and perplexity now seemed to arise. Many of the hearers seemed no ways able to discover *that* that had thought the wall, and I now understood how it might well happen that young men who stumbled over the first approaches to speculative philosophy in so clumsy a way might, in later efforts, fall into errors which should be grave, not to say dangerous. Fichte's lecture was exceedingly distinct and clear. I was wholly absorbed in his subject, and had to confess that I had never listened to such a speaker before.

I gradually became acquainted with a number of families in Jena. A. W. Schlegel and his distinguished and highly accomplished wife, with their amiable daughter, were the friends whose house I most habitually sought. Through them I became acquainted with Hufeland, joint editor with Schlegel

of the *Journal of Literature*. He received me cordially into his house. In fact, he, Schlegel and Fromann formed the circle in which I lived. Our talk was almost exclusively confined to literary matters, the quarrels of authors, and their relations to their antagonists; and, although not a writer myself, I suddenly found myself transferred to a field of criticism which I saw would sooner or later bring me into public collision with prominent men. My mind was very productive; ideas crowded in upon me, but I lacked the quiet needed to work them out and apply them. I studied, experimented, and was borne more rapidly than ever along in the current of fresh thoughts. Schelling was expounding the Philosophy of Nature according to a prospectus which was printed and distributed among his students. I attended his lectures; every hour gave me fresh food for thought and made my stay in Jena more valuable. I seemed transferred to a new life. The men of whom I had heard and whose works I had read, the men for whose acquaintance I had so earnestly longed, were now my daily companions. The still monologue of my life had transferred itself into the animated play of conversation; I could hardly understand the novelty of my situation. Schelling seemed to stand the nearest to me, and even what there was antagonistic in our modes of thought drew me to him all the more. He had advanced from philosophy to the study of nature. I now became acquainted with his philosophical writings, and wondered at the thoroughness and confidence and power with

which, even in extreme youth, he handled themes which were foreign to the thought of any man of the time. He was scarcely twenty years old when he wrote his treatise on The Ego as the Foundation Principle of Philosophy. He seemed to have renewed in him powers which for centuries had not been seen; he seemed called to the work of raising philosophy from the dust. At times I felt too insignificant to sit in his presence; but his nearness awaked me to new energies and to enlarged views, which without him I never should have attained. Spinoza roused me from sleep; Schelling set me to working.

One evening I was invited to Fromann's. Goethe was expected. With what trepidation I looked forward to the meeting, every one can imagine who knows what Goethe had been to me from my childhood up.

My intimate acquaintance with Goethe's writings had attracted the attention of Schlegel and his wife. They wished to have us meet, and see what impression the great poet of Weimar would make on the man from the North. I was invited by them to read from *Faust*, the first part of which had just appeared. The book, however, was not readily found, and I repeated the first monologue from memory. I asked if I should go on, and could have repeated a good part of the book without help. Lady Schlegel was delighted, and agreed to introduce me to the poet forthwith. But Fromann anticipated her kind intention.

It is a peculiar feeling with which one meets for

the first time a man who has exercised a great and decisive influence on his life. Such a moment forms an epoch in the life; and it seemed to me, as I walked to Fromann's house, as if a great catastrophe were just at hand. Goethe appeared. It is known to every one who has seen him, how his noble figure, his admirable carriage, his speaking eye, the majesty of his whole appearance, and the composure with which he does everything, were overwhelmingly imposing on all who met him for the first time. The greatness revealed in his works was fitly expressed in the man himself. When I first saw him I had to turn away to hide my tears, so much was I overcome. It seemed as if I were looking upon Egmont, Orange, and Tasso, in him. In the company was a Mr. Stackelberg, of Liefland; he was introduced to Goethe at the same time with myself.

The hallucination that Goethe must have had a suspicion of what he had been to me was natural; but he entertained himself the whole evening with Mr. Stackelberg. It was not my good fortune to draw his attention for a single moment. Goethe was then in his best days. The composure which characterized his whole manner began to displease me, yes, even to embitter me. I was silent, troubled, and felt myself wounded. I remembered stories of his haughtiness and coolness, and went to my rooms in a mood almost unendurable. The northern European is by nature easily wounded in this way, and I have had to struggle all my life with a sensitiveness which has often made me very unhappy. How-

ever, I got along as well as I could, and repeated Philene's words as I walked home,—

“If I don't love thee, what is't to thee?”

but yet it would lie like a dark shadow across my path.

I must communicate my troubles to some one, and so on the next day I hurried to the Schlegels. Lady Schlegel was amazed at the bitterness with which I spoke. It troubled her, too, that Fromann had anticipated her, and she promised that at a second interview with Goethe, which she would bring about, all should be amicably settled. But here my northern stubbornness came in. The higher I honored him, the more decisive the influence he had exercised upon me, the more difficult I found it to consent to meet him a second time. I expressed myself strongly that Goethe must call upon me first; no entreaty changed my mind. One evening I was invited to the Schlegels: they had, out of pure kindness, planned a surprise. Goethe was to be there, and I was not to know it. I saw through it, wheeled round, and did not appear in the company. Weeks elapsed, and I gave myself to my studies. Still I often had a bitterness of heart, as if I had lost some great good. The family of the celebrated anatomist Loder was among those who had received me in the most friendly way. His birthday was approaching, and it was the intention to celebrate it by a theatrical performance. The “Actor against his Will” was selected, and I was ap-

pointed to take the chief part. Singularly enough, for years before I had devoted myself passionately to the drama, and had acquired some skill in theatrical representations. The stage erected, repeated rehearsals were held. I was not only the chief player, but the manager also. I took the liberty to make some changes in the play, and introduced a few passages from the poems of Iffland and Schiller.

The days flew by; the time for the final rehearsal arrived. To my amazement, as we were just beginning, Goethe appeared. He had promised, it seemed, to be present at the final rehearsal, but that I did not know. After he had saluted the ladies, he came up to me and greeted me as an old acquaintance and friend. "I have long been hoping to see you in Weimar," said he; "I have much to talk over with you. When these affairs are by, I hope you will accompany me home." Who was happier than I? It seemed as if now my hour of highest joy had come. I fear that some of my delight appeared in my acting. Here and there Goethe gave some good counsel. As I was repeating the passage from Schiller, Goethe stepped up to me in a friendly way and said, "Select other passages, if you please; better leave our good friend Schiller out of the play." All then passed off well. I substituted Kotzebue for Schiller; the birthday festival was a success, and I added the reputation of a skilful actor to what credit with the public I had won before.

The day after, according to promise, Goethe ap-

peared before my house. I hurried down, with my coat under my arm, and rode by his side to Weimar. I stayed there a number of days as his guest.

Goethe was communicative in the highest degree, and this by necessity, because it was his object to gain over young naturalists to his views. The days at Weimar sped by in uninterrupted conversation on scientific subjects. I became acquainted with Goethe on a side of his character hitherto unknown to me. His deep sympathy with nature, that quickening, creative power which appeared in all his poems and threw its clear light over all his words, became apparent; plants and animals, and even the flashing colors of the rainbow, he could view, not in their isolated unity, but in all their mutual dependences and relations. Whoever has followed the course of my own life, and studied my character, will understand how valuable those days with Goethe must have been to me. The object of all my efforts he seemed to grasp in a moment, and the treasure I so restlessly sought appeared to be his peaceful possession. I spent those days in a kind of ecstasy; and I now felt thoroughly persuaded that I had gained such a comprehensive insight into nature, that it would be a spring of undying poetical feeling, and would crown my whole life with the richest fruits. My previous career seemed like a dark prophecy whose fulfilment lay close at hand; and, full of animation and hope, I hastened back to Jena to communicate to Schelling what I believed I had discovered. But he knew it all better than I, although whether he had then come to

personal contact with Goethe I cannot perfectly recall.

During this time of excited feeling, which had not yet crystallized into a school, and while there was so much scientific and political activity, every event called forth a lively interest. According to the brothers Schlegel, Schiller could hardly be compared to Goethe. The latter was deified, the writing of *Wilhelm Meister* was regarded as the decisive turning-point of modern imaginative art, and as the greatest event of the times; the former was criticised with severity and rudeness. I could not join in this. The frank, knightly spirit which prevailed in his poems exercised a powerful influence over me, and the severe truthfulness of his dramas pleased me much. I never favored the views of those men who made nothing of life but a long-drawn play of irony. And although I never could compare Schiller with Goethe, although I believed I could discern a kind of narrowness in his writings, yet everything which he wrote was pervaded with a crystal clearness and purity which pleased me. Schiller had for some years been laboring at his great drama, *Wallenstein*. *Wallenstein's Camp* had already been brought upon the stage, and it is well known how lively an interest Goethe took in its representation. It was, if I mistake not, the first fruit which appeared of the friendly alliance of these two great poets. Goethe found in the varied and changing scenes of this drama a favorable opening for a musical composition to be interwoven, and added to the clearness and vividness of the whole.

The tragic moment which causes you to suspect the downfall of the hero of the great drama throws an eventful light through the whole play. It was in fact a complete dramatic composition. Much pains were taken with all the surroundings; the decorations were not merely respectable, they were fine. Everything seemed favorable for an admirable representation, and the people of Jena do not willingly neglect any such opportunity as this. The more cultivated regarded this dramatic entertainment as an important affair, one that would give the drama a higher importance, and by which both city and university would be improved and made eminent.

Piccolomini, the opening part of the great drama, was complete, and would be represented for the first time. The excitement with which people looked forward to this event was striking. The families of the professors manifested the greatest eagerness to obtain places at the first announcement of the play. Through the whole city the people talked of nothing else. Mothers and daughters intrigued in each other's behalf for tickets; and whoever had obtained a place held himself fortunate. Amid all this anxious striving quarrels arose, which did not quickly pass away. I rode with the counsellors Hufeland and Loder; the wives of both were with us, and Loder's beautiful daughter. So we six crowded into one coach, dismounted at the Elephant Tavern, and hurried to the theatre. Schlegel's gifted wife was left at home. Schelling, too, remained, ceaselessly busy with his lectures. I had obtained a seat

in Schiller's own box, and made his personal acquaintance under these interesting circumstances.

To speak here of this drama were superfluous. The excitement of the public mind communicated itself to every one. The greatest pains had been spent in the preparation, the long passages were spoken without any breaks, and the by-play was excellent; there was no fault in this respect to be found; all the performers, it was plain, made the greatest effort. Every one wanted to earn praise. And in truth all the circumstances could not be more favorable. Goethe, to whom the dramatic art was a matter of great importance, was himself the chief manager; and his eminence gave him an influence over the whole theatre corps which was hardly ever equalled elsewhere. The performers did not so much fear him for his greatness as they respected him for his skill; they well knew that whoever did credit to the stage of Weimar had gained a reputation which would be known through Germany, and that if circumstances should make it desirable to leave Weimar they would not be long in securing an advantageous position. Enthusiasm for a science which was cherished by Goethe's active interest was united with a desire to secure all the advantages which acting might give to such a play as *Wallenstein*. The public excitement, too, naturally reacted upon the performers and stimulated their efforts. The impression which all this produced upon me reminded me vividly of the evening in *Wilhelm Meister* when *Hamlet* was played for the first time.

And yet I was thrown into great perplexity. I have already alluded to the passion which I had in Copenhagen for dramatic representations. *Piccolomini* was the first important play which I saw in Weimar. I carried with me to the theatre the most exalted ideas of what the Weimar stage must be under Goethe's direction, and now I was compelled to confess that the playing was freer and more natural, and that the ability of the performers in Copenhagen was greater than here. I had seen *Schröder*, and of course did not expect to find his equal in Weimar. But what was effected in Hamburg and Copenhagen by eminent skill, was made up in Weimar by the masterly management of Goethe, leaving as he did not one deficiency or marked defect to mar the unity of the whole.

I always like to read over a noted drama if it is possible before it is played. The reading is of itself a sort of representation, and he must have a dull mind who is not better pleased with this than with what he ordinarily meets at the theatre. Only a great actor who is himself a poet can bring out those hidden beauties which escape us in the reading. While we are acting the drama on the theatre of our own mind, the personages of the play form themselves with great distinctness in our thought, and if at the public representation we do not see those who correspond to our own imaginings of hero and heroines, the impression is only transitory, and the one which we formed in the stillness of our own study is the permanent one. Wholly different is it when we make the acquaintance of a drama within

the walls of a theatre. The *dramatis personæ* stamp their figures so ineradicably in my mind at least that I can never shake them off; and so I always carry about with me the lank, haggard, sorrowful-looking Graff as Wallenstein. He had taken unspeakable pains with his part, and had committed it thoroughly; his diction was admirable. In no place was there that unhappy false tone which always appears when a player is expressing what he does not understand; and yet his figure, his movement, and his playing, were thoroughly wooden. It appeared as if he were repeating a lesson which Goethe and Schiller had taught him with the greatest care. Even when at a later period I saw the incomparable Fleck as Wallenstein, the unhappy Graff always came into my mind as his shadow, and dispelled the charm. Even Bohz did not please me as Max at all; only Miss Jagemann, young, blooming, and spirited, charmed me as Theckla.

But I soon saw that Schiller, who sat by my side, was more than satisfied with all; he was delighted. "By such playing as this," said he, "a man comes to learn what his own piece is; it is ennobled by such a representation, and the words when spoken are better than when I wrote them." I was particularly surprised at the applause which Schiller gave to a young woman who played the part of Terzky. There was, indeed, a certain vivacity and even passion in her playing, and in the most effective passages she never missed a word; so far as this the part was well performed. But in her figure, her movement, and her pronunciation, there was something

so mean that she was to me positively offensive; and yet Schiller was delighted. How he, with his accurate high German accent, could bear her flat Berlin pronunciation, was past my comprehension. Even Goethe, who occasionally came into the box where we sat, appeared entirely pleased with the performance, although he did not express himself enthusiastically as Schiller did. Looked at from the point of view which was probably the true one, that he did not wish to disturb the evident satisfaction of Schiller, it is conceivable that Goethe, after many painstaking rehearsals, came at last to fairly wonder how, out of the materials at his command, he could attain such comparative perfection.

Directly at the close of the performance we drove out to Jena, and, although it was very late, some of us assembled at the house of Professor Schlegel to talk with his wife about the play. She demanded, in that decisive way habitual to her, a definite opinion of the piece; and here the fact showed itself that the first impression of a work grasped as a whole will not admit of the sharp language of positive criticism. Most critics, when they undertake to pronounce judgment upon works of genius in all departments of literature, particularly when they are arranged with a definite plot, are apt to feel that they must give verbal expression to the spell which is laid upon them. And so, in trying to describe the indescribable, the real spirit of the work is reduced to nothing in their hands, and the plot remains as the only thing of value.

In this circle there was no great inclination to

pronounce a very favorable judgment upon Schiller. He barely could gain justice, not to say leniency, and yet the deep impression produced by his play had to get vent. I well remember how Madame Schlegel, after much had been said on this side and that, turned abruptly to me with the question, "Have you not, also, an opinion to express?" Schlegel, the most thoughtful one of us all, remained silent to hear my judgment. I had noticed a certain similarity between Wallenstein and Don Carlos. I had observed that the same thought lies as the ground-work of each, although developed in entirely different ways. I remarked upon this resemblance, commenting upon the parallelism between the loves of Max and Theckla in Piccolomini, and Elizabeth and Posa in Don Carlos. I criticised the length of special passages, and the air of mere declamation which this length must give them when spoken; and I showed that out of the same source would spring a tedious uniformity, which would prevent the hearer from discriminating between the characters of the play. Indeed, it has become plain to me since, that this declamatory style of Schiller has been very hostile to the interests of the stage, for it has not only banished that individuality which men love to see clearly marked, but it has also produced a theatrical style of speaking which is noticeable everywhere, heard even in the pulpit, and in the mouths of school-boys, as they declaim at exhibition. And the effect of this monotonous style adopted by Schiller is felt in the fine arts, in painting, and especially in music. We notice

that in these two branches the sharply-defined works of our ancestors, and the clear-cut melodies which live in the memory, have given place to broad, platitudinous masses of color and sound, without individuality, and as lifeless as they are vague. All our hope for the future rests upon the constant diminishing of this monotonous declamatory style, and the restoring, as Tieck is now doing, of that sharp delineation of character which distinguishes all the works of Goethe; that the painters may return to their former clear simplicity; that Thorwaldsen may restore individuality to the works of sculpture; and that Mendelssohn may bring out of the chaos of modern sound the strength and definiteness and crystal beauty which make eminent the time of Handel and Bach.

What made those times so delightful at Jena was the unity which prevailed among all those founders of a new school of literature. It was almost like the unity which prevails in the organic world, where one root puts forth many forms, different in aspect, but in full agreement with each other. They all felt that they had a common work to do, and that they could do it together. Fichte and Schelling understood the differences in their philosophy, although they had never expressed it. Meantime they did not see each other often, and could come to no agreement. Fichte gave himself entirely to ethics and its kindred theories, so that they seldom came into direct collision.

Berlin was then regarded as the seat of the lowest order of mind in Germany, and was but little thought

of. The General German Library, published by Nicolai, the Berlin Monthly, by Biester, were viewed as the staples of common-place thought; but yet even at Berlin there were men of mark. Among them was Schleiermacher, but as yet I knew him only by name. Tieck, the poet, made a strong impression upon me. The appreciation of poetry had fallen so low in Germany, that Tieck's first writings made no stir, and his publisher tells us that his works lay on his counters as valueless as waste paper. The brothers Schlegel were the first who called attention to the richness and grace of Tieck, and it now seems almost incredible how it was possible not to discern the charming style and the poetical freshness of that man, destined to such eminence.

A. W. Schlegel's translation and criticism of Romeo and Juliet, his paper on Dante, and the writings which followed these, called the minds of men away from the narrower literature which had interested them, and taught them to use a better standard for trying works of poetry; and it began to be seen that the whole genius of literature had changed, and that we were entering on a new epoch. No sense of the beauty of the fine arts had yet been awakened in me. I only suspected their worth. Lessing's *Laocoön* could give me thoughts, but few definite images. I now perceived what the merit of Winckelmann was in opening to my generation the resources of Greek and Roman art; but as yet I had seen as good as nothing, my eye was closed to the beauty of art; what Goethe showed me with

so kindly a feeling could only have worth to the enlightened vision. I sighed when I confessed with Northern honesty that a sense of the fine arts seemed to be wanting to me, and yet the consciousness filled me that every man must have a certain native power of appreciating the beautiful. I saw myself transferred, as it were, to a higher world, and it could not be that I must remain a stranger to what was in it. As sky and earth, mountains and seas, plants and animals, surround me in the world of sense, so to my more cultivated and awakened eye there must be displayed forms of beauty which I could not then perceive. I did not pretend to affect what I did not possess, and only looked forward with hope to new attainments in the appreciation of art. Goethe spoke comforting words to me. I had never given up the looking forward to an Italian journey, but he directed me not to Italy, but to Dresden. "There," said he, "you will find treasures of art which will be ample material for study." The honesty with which I spoke of my deficiencies seemed to please him.

During my winter in Jena a letter of Jacobi called out a great degree of attention. It had that singular blending of simple assent and contradiction which characterized everything of Jacobi's when he treated of things metaphysical. The celebrated passage, in which he pleads the right of some to oppose the generally-conceded principles of morality, made a deep impression on the public mind. I quote his words; they are in a certain way classic: "I am," he says, "that atheist and godless

man who will lie as Desdemona, dying, lied ; will deceive as Pylades did in behalf of Orestes ; will murder as Timoleon did ; will break law and oath as did Epaminondas and John de Witt ; will commit suicide like Otho ; will rob temples like David ; yes, pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath merely because I am hungry, and because the law is made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the law ; for with the holiest devotion to conscience I know that the *privilegium aggratiandi* in cases of such a nature is the peculiar right of man, the seal of his worth and of his divine origin."

This letter, written upon green paper, on account of the weakness of Jacobi's eyes, was passed around, and was read by us all in the same spirit in which it was written. It was praised by some, and criticised severely by others, although the time had not yet come in which he was a mark for the most general as well as the most bitter attacks.

What specially characterized those halcyon days at Jena, were the assiduity and zeal which prevailed in every one ; the conviction that in order to meet an opponent one must fight on his own ground, and must employ not mere generalities nor happy turns of rhetoric, but must use the strong weapons of a precise view and extended knowledge. The men who were at the head of all had published works whose praise was in all mouths ; like Lessing, they had won their literary citizenship by the most strenuous labor and the most skilful attacks upon the prevailing views ; they were men who knew what they wanted, having a definite aim which they persistently followed ;

and when criticism was sharp and close, it was, notwithstanding the power of thought, of views which, long cherished, had come to maturity, and made way for themselves. The times were not such as to make men content with trying to revive old forms, and to catch applause by specious show; it was an era full of young life and untried powers, and it threw off the fetters of mere custom; it would not bear the stiffness of old age; it must be active and jubilant in new strength. Men found fault with such innovators as the brothers Schlegel, and charged them with pursuing paradoxes; but must not everything, which is really the fruit of greatness, seem strange, unintelligible, paradoxical, to those who are simply trying to grasp the scattered details of life and science?

## CHAPTER III.

WANT OF ATTRACTIONS IN BERLIN — INCIDENT FROM FICHTE'S LIFE — HIS UNSWERVING ADVOCACY OF TRUTH — FICHTE DRIVEN FROM JENA — HIS ACCOUNT OF THE USE OF HIS SYSTEM — CARDINAL POINTS OF FICHTE'S PHILOSOPHY — HIS ALLEGED ATHEISM — JOURNEY TO FREIBERG — SECOND RECEPTION BY GOETHE — INTERVIEW WITH MALTE BRUN — GLOOMY ENTRANCE INTO HALLE — MORE FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS — REICHARDT, THE MUSICAL COMPOSER.

IN Jena, Berlin did not stand very high, and that city had not for me any special attractions. The sandy surroundings, the character of the poets resident there, the Berlin philosophy, and the library, formed an aggregate which seemed in my eyes poor and mean, and from all I saw and heard I had no desire to tarry long in Berlin. Lessing, I was told, could find no place there. Goethe had a horror of it, and, it was believed, had never been there; all my acquaintances thought little of Berlin. I had no interest in the political affairs of Germany, and as for fine soldiers, having been brought up among them, my curiosity had been satisfied. And yet there were three men living there who were among my most intimate friends, and although Jena seemed most charged with activity, yet I could not forget those three men. Schleiermacher was there, filling the humble post of preacher at the Charité Hospital,

Frederick Schlegel was then there, and Tieck was a native of Berlin.

An important circumstance took place before I left Jena. Fichte was arraigned as an atheist by the theologian Reinhard, acting in behalf of the court of Saxony. This whole affair has become so public that it seems almost superfluous to speak of it at the present time. It was occasioned by an article published by Forberg, in Niethammer's Journal, on moral government. Fichte took upon himself the answering of this article. The whole story may be found in the biography of Fichte, written by his son. What impression this affair made upon us, may easily be imagined. We were roused at once. We believed that we saw in it a protest against the spirit of free inquiry. Fichte's conduct was throughout firm and worthy of him. When he was summoned to an explanation, he answered at once that if he were cramped in his freedom it would compel him to leave Jena. The reply from Weimar contained a reproof for the injudicious manner with which he had expressed himself on the most sacred subjects, and a warning to be more careful in the future. It was, as we saw, the object of the Weimar court to give the affair a look as if Fichte had voluntarily withdrawn. His removal from Jena seemed unavoidable. The court worded its reproof so as to call out if possible his resignation at once. But when Fichte declared that this reproof was not of a kind to compel him to withdraw, the court in Weimar saw itself forced to remove him by the exercise of authority. Just then, when all minds were

in agitation, Paulus declared earnestly for Fichte. I was often at his house, and it was earnestly talked of there whether it would not be a useful thing to draw up a petition of the students. Almost all of these were from a distance. Fichte's celebrity had drawn the majority thither; and it really seemed as if they had the right to ask for the continuance in office of the teacher who had drawn them together. I drew up such a petition, in which Fichte's great service, and the right which the students claimed, were stated. I carried it to Paulus. He adopted it with few changes, and I did not doubt that through the influence of my countryman, Malte Muller, who exercised a great influence over many students, it would receive a large number of names.

In the mean time a similar course was struck out at Weimar. Another petition was drawn up in the name of the students, in which the duke was besought to retain Fichte in the university. But the petition contained, also, the confession that Fichte had expressed himself in his lectures with blame-worthy carelessness, and the favor of the duke was implored in behalf of one who in other things was so honored and loved. A student from Rugen received this petition through the hands of Hufeland, and it was represented to him that Fichte himself did not disapprove of the manner in which it was drawn up. Anxious to be of service to Fichte in any way, he sought to obtain names for the petition, and succeeded in a manner equal to his hopes.

I found a young man to whom I gave the petition which had been drawn up by me, and told him

to carry it to the lecture-rooms, and wherever else he could obtain the signatures of students. He had read the other petition, and had noticed what a different impression it gave. The Rugen student was carrying it around, and had already obtained a number of signatures, for the students had no hesitation about giving their names. I was amazed. I snatched up my petition and ran around to find the Rugen student, who was known to me. I met him in a short time on the street, hurrying from house to house, and drew him aside. I was excited in the highest degree. I represented to him that through the petition which he was carrying round victory was granted to the opponents of Fichte, and showed him my petition, and told him that I had showed it to Professor Paulus. I easily gained over the young man, and all the more readily when I exhibited to him the source from which his petition came, and made him acquainted with all the circumstances. He was now wholly won over to my side; he pressed into the most crowded lecture-rooms, confessed his mistake, and easily obtained the names of the young men on the paper which I had drawn up. On the afternoon of the same day my petition lay before me with several hundred signatures, and two delegates carried it at once to Weimar to lay it before the duke. Hufeland, the jurist, had received from Weimar the one drawn up in the interest of Fichte's adversaries, or had himself drawn it up; the Rugen student had received it as I knew from his hands. I was invited to his house that evening. I found him in a pet, and I will not deny that I took

a kind of selfish pleasure in the thought that I knew the secret of his trouble. It was only years afterward, when I read the Life of Fichte, that I learned with astonishment that two petitions were sent to the duke. Fichte's adversaries must, therefore, have succeeded in getting some names.

I expected no result from the petition. After some days the students were called together by the pro-rector, and informed that, by the decision of the Weimer court, Fichte had virtually asked for his dismissal in the steps which he had taken.

This whole circumstance was of the greatest interest to me in more than one respect. I did not, indeed, see Fichte very often; my studies and my whole mode of thought removed me from him. Yet I could not help loving him, and the strength of his moral convictions, forming as they did the basis of his whole philosophy, won for him my high respect. It was very easy when I was with him to be drawn into talk upon his metaphysical system, and even to debate with him heartily. Against the rigidity of his ideas of truth I had much to say. Even before the appearance of Jacobi's letter I had a hot contest with him for the *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*; this unswerving way of stating moral truth was contrary to my nature. When I heard him say that under no condition is one right in telling an untruth, I ventured to propose to him the following case: A woman with her child is dangerously sick; the infant, in a dying state, lies in the next room. The physicians have decisively declared that any excitement will cost her her life. The child dies. I sit at

the bed of my wife ; she asks after the welfare of the little one. The truth will kill her ; shall it be told ? "It shall," answered Fichte ; "her question must be answered." "That is," replied I, "speaking exactly, your child is dead. I would lie," said I ; and tears burst from my eyes, because I remembered witnessing just such a scene, "and I decidedly call this lie a truth, my truth." "Your truth," replied Fichte, with indignation ; "there is none such belonging to any man ; truth rules over you, not you over truth. If the wife dies with the telling the truth, she must die." I saw the impossibility of coming to a mutual understanding with him on this subject, and to make clear to him my idea of what would be right in such a case. With all the rigidness of his doctrine, Fichte was himself the most kind-hearted of men. I was convinced that under such circumstances he himself would lie, and remained silent.

I had now lived to see a man whom I honored and loved, charged as an atheist, and driven from his post. The thing which had shocked me when I read of it as occurring in past centuries was now taking place under my eyes, and in the very circle of my friends. All the recollections of my childhood awoke again, and I asked myself whether the charge which was brought against the distinguished philosopher was completely groundless or not. That Fichte's system was in direct line with that of Kant, I could plainly see. The subjects of sure knowledge exist in *apparent* form around us ; but philosophy has to deal with truth. The moral feeling and its expression, the conscience, are a fact of

consciousness as much as space and time, only with this important difference, that the things taken into cognizance by the conscience are not imaginary, but exist *per se*. Besides, it could not be predicated of morals that they exist in the same sense in which matter exists; they remain evermore a Thou shalt, but as such they are outside of the imagination, and have absolute existence.

I remember well how in a narrow circle of intimate friends Fichte related to us how his philosophy rose, and how the first conception of it entered his mind. It had long seemed to him that truth lies in the union and unity of thought and the object of thought; he had learned that this unity can never be found within the domain of the senses, and that where it does appear, as in the mathematics, it is only a dull, dead formalism, and wholly divorced from life. At that point the thought suddenly struck him that the act in which the self-consciousness conceives of itself is yet a subject of our knowledge. The *ego* recognizes itself through its own manifestation of itself; the *ego* thinking and the *ego* thought, the knowing and the object of the knowledge, are one, and from this point of unity, and not from scattered elements, time and space and the postulates of all thought proceed. If, then, thought he to himself, I can grasp this first act of self-knowledge, presupposed as it is in all human thinking and doing, and hidden as it is in the various opinions and actions of men,—if I can grasp this and develop it in its simple clearness, and follow it to its last results, must there not be displayed in it, active, and work-

ing, that same certainty which we now possess in mathematics? This thought struck him with such power that he conceived the idea to make the *ego* the basis of his philosophy. In the bookseller's announcement of his writings it was declared that Fichte would be to philosophy what Euclid was to mathematics. I do not know that this expression was ever published in the words of Fichte; but, after I had heard from his own lips the account of the rise of his philosophy, I felt convinced that the announcements contained his own expressed hopes of the place which he was to fill.

When it is remembered that Fichte's training was under Kant's influence, it cannot be doubted that the master's rigid support of an absolute, unbending morality as a result, and not a means, formed the basis and the leading feature in the independent action of the *ego*, and that what he borrowed from Kant must become clearer and clearer in the system of Fichte himself. It is true that in the scheme of the latter it always remained a thing unexplained, and, indeed, incomprehensible, how the moral law, which was only a postulate, having its mere significance in the effort to realize it, rather than in the possibility of doing so, could come to be a positive guiding principle, an active thing which had its value in its own reality. Out of this impossible conception sprang all our ideas. And so there lay at the basis of Fichte's philosophy a real mystery, unsolvable, and, indeed, unapproachable; and it must have been a prime object with him to keep those subjects which pertain to the domains

of things known and intelligible off from this more mysterious ground. And in this mystery lay Fichte's God. I understood this well, and the charge of atheism, now brought against Fichte, was to me a sad proof of the poor superficiality of the times; much more insignificant was this exalted and mysterious God of morality than that God whom most men feared rather than loved, whom they pushed away into a far distant domain, where he hid himself behind laws to which he subjected himself no less than us. And yet, I said to myself, thinking it all over in my own mind, that is not the God of my childhood, whom I have lost and whom I seek again.

But it was not merely this suspicion of a deeper divine nature which separated me from Fichte; in still another respect we were wide apart. The discrimination made by Kant between theoretical and practical philosophy, the confessed uncertainty of the former, and the empty generalities of the latter, I opposed with my inmost soul. And yet the world contains not only what is appreciable to the senses, but also a higher, even if it be a mysterious, reality. This latter was lost sight of in Fichte's scheme. It was always a sad thing to me to look at the world from his point of view; there was no tree, no living creature, no landscape that he then could perceive in all its beauty. That the mystery of our spiritual nature is not only found in human thoughts and deeds, but also in the rich fulness of the imagination and in the form itself, seemed to be completely hidden from him. What Kant treated as

phantasm, to Fichte became mere negation, and that was everything which was not the *ego*, and in which the *ego* manifested itself. The fantastic image remained, and that, too, in perfect distinctness, but only to be changed through the instrumentality of the *ego* into the *ego* itself. In other words, the servant of an incomprehensible law is transformed into the Titan of self-determination, and even into the Creator of heaven and of earth. Such a philosophy was completely contrary to my nature, and the more closely I comprehended it, the more willingly I rejected it.

Schelling's system is doctrine of identity. The unity of subjective and objective in the conception of ideas was more kindred to my taste, trained as I had been in the school of Spinoza.

It was not without sadness that I left Jena; and, although the tie that bound me to the distinguished men there was too purely an intellectual one to be severed by mere distance, yet I felt how much I was losing. I travelled by way of Weimar, and visited Goethe, who gave me a cordial greeting, although I thought I could detect some embarrassment in his manner. He seemed to be acquainted with the part which I had taken in the Fichte affair, and the Weimar court, of which Goethe was a leading member, found itself in an unpleasant dilemma; for in one point of view it felt itself bound to favor that free development of thought of which Goethe was a most distinguished advocate; and in another point of view it was necessary to take cognizance of a charge, which was a serious one in the eyes of the

duke, the court, and Goethe himself. Through the pressure of all the Saxon princes demanding his dismissal, Fichte fell, but his patrons could not disguise a certain sense of shame at the event. Fichte, the younger, has cited passages from Goethe's Recollections of his own Life, and expressions found in his letters, in which the perplexity of the Weimar court appears, and especially the pain which Goethe suffered at being a participant in the affair.

When I left Goethe the whole course of events in which I had just taken a part rose vividly before my eyes ; and a mournful suspicion that that beautiful flower, which had bloomed with such fairness at Jena, was now to have its petals and its fragrance carried away on all the random winds of heaven, filled me with unspeakable sorrow.

I travelled to Halle by way of Leipsic, and now passed the Prussian frontiers for the first time. In Leipsic, where I tarried only two or three days, I met Malte Brun, who wearied me with his demagogue-like talk. He had been banished from Denmark ; he was now on his way to more liberal France, and hoped to find a situation in Paris. But his representations of Prussia were not without effect upon me. He represented it as a land in servitude ; the great army he thought would not only be turned against the enemies of the country, but against the people themselves ; he supposed that the aristocracy would be oppressive in consequence of their pride, and officials in consequence of their superciliousness. I had heard so much of this kind of talk that my breath almost choked me as I approached the fron-

tiers, and my first impressions were accidentally very unfavorable. I was shut up in an uncomfortable post-wagon, and jolted till I was mellow. The country around Halle seemed desolate; the day was foggy and rainy, and the wind whistled over the fields. When we were quite near the city a fellow-traveller pointed a gallows out to me. A part of the town lying around was called "Before-the-Gallows-Gate." We drove through this barrier of dismal name, and traversed a long, dark street, whose high, gloomy, dirty houses were most unpleasant to see. This was called the Gallows Street. But we had to go yet further to the stage-office; and my companion pointed me out a second gallows, which stood upon the market-place, and on which the names of soldiers who had suffered there were inscribed. I instinctively put my hand to my throat to see if it was safe. I felt like a criminal on his way to execution. We arrived at the stage-office; baggage-teams and post-wagons with their passengers were there; it was the time of the Fair, and there was much travel through Halle. The post-wagon was cleared, the trunks of the passengers were stacked side by side; but we saw the custom-house officers so busy with the baggage-wagons, and with the goods of other travellers, that we had little prospect of being attended to for hours. I tried to keep my patience, but I felt a deep bitterness boiling within me which I could hardly suppress. I bit my lips together, and walked silent to and fro. The officials may have observed my humor. After what seemed to me a short eternity our turn came. I put

on a cheerful mien, walked politely to one of the custom-house officers, and asked him to release me as soon as possible. He gave me a savage look, answered not a word, and turned his back upon me. I was the very last to be served; but now my madness had reached its highest point. The official commanded me to open my trunk, and asked in an authoritative way whether there were any dutiable goods in it. I answered not a word. He repeated the question in a loud and almost threatening tone. I held my peace, and opened the trunk. The things were now examined with the most rigorous exactness; clothes, linen, and books were laid upon the trunks around, and the examination of my effects took a longer time than that of all the other passengers together. My defiant air had displeased the official, and he wanted to punish me. I looked on with assumed calmness; they found nothing. When the examination was at an end, I began to pack my things very slowly and with great care. "Hurry up," cried the custom-house man, tartly; "you see that you are in the way." "That is not my fault," I answered, coolly. "Aren't you ready yet?" he asked, threateningly. "Sir," said I now, "I am a traveller from a distant country. I am journeying under the protection of my king. I have said not a word that could offend you. I carry no contraband goods; my person can excite no suspicion; and yet you have treated me unhandsomely and impolitely; you have robbed me of hours which I might have better spent; you have torn all my goods from the trunk. Now it is *my* turn. I claim the right to

take care of my own property. I must look carefully to see whether, in the haste of unpacking, something may not have fallen among the chests and packages; my linen and clothes must be laid back without a fold; just now I happen to have time, and shall stay here till I am ready to go." The official seemed to have a great desire to use force upon me. I assured him coolly that I should carry it to the last extremity, and that the least violence done to my person would be reported by the ambassador to my king.

Some of my fellow-travellers were still there, and I called them in as witnesses. The official walked growling up and down. I got through at last, and when I left the stage-office I felt like a stranger in a foreign land. Such an unfriendly greeting did I receive from the country to which I was about to dedicate the best powers of my life.

I tarried a few days in Halle, and confess that, as I came in contact with the scholars of the place, my first impressions gave way to more favorable ones. The new king (Frederick William III.) had just taken a tour of propitiation through his territories, and the enthusiasm with which he had been received knew no bounds. The universal talk was about him. Much, yes, everything, was expected of him, of his honesty and of his knowledge of the times and their demands. The queen, the beautiful Louisa, whose genius was prized, and whose purity was admired, was almost the object of worship to the people. Wherever I went I was sure to hear the praises of the royal pair. Landlord and boots

at the inn, merchants in the stores, every man with whom I came in contact, had his word on the king's excellent sense and the queen's beauty and loveliness. Now how different the country looked to me; how changed the people appeared; how speedily vanished that darker impression with which I entered the kingdom, and how much I found to prize in this new land!

While in Halle, I visited the house of Professor Reinhold Forster, the distinguished circumnavigator of the globe, and the father of a son to be yet more noted as a traveller, George Forster. Professor Forster had very recently died, and I was permitted to examine the valuable collections which he left, and to use his extensive library. Little thought I that I was to be his successor.

I made the acquaintance of Reichardt, the distinguished musical composer. He lived in the little village of Giebichenstein, just outside of the walls of Halle. The daughter, afterwards to be so near to me, was at Hamburg, and I did not meet her, but I was often at her father's, where I always received a cordial welcome. Reichardt was then just on the point of going to Berlin to bring out his opera of *Brennus*. He was strongly inclined to democratic ideas, and this put him not only under the ban of government, but exposed him to the bitter attacks of Goethe, and to harshness from the Schlegels. But hard as was the treatment, and severe as were the charges which he received in consequence of his leaning to democracy, my heart went out towards him, and in his house I was always received as a

friend. Reichardt gave me his Berlin address, and urged me to visit him, when I should come thither.

Thus had I, without my knowledge, been welcome within the homes of my predecessor in the professor's chair and of my father-in-law.

## CHAPTER IV.

STEFFENS'S FIRST VISIT TO BERLIN — BERLIN — MEETS TIECK — STEFFENS IN A STRAIT PLACE — FREIBERG — WERNER, THE MINERALOGIST — LIFE AT FREIBERG — VISITS DRESDEN — THE GALLERY AT DRESDEN — FREEDOM OF LIFE AT FREIBERG — STEFFENS'S MANNER WITH OPPONENTS — REFLECTIONS ON ART — OLD GERMAN POETRY — DISCOVERY OF THE VOLTAIC PILE — STEFFENS'S FIRST BOOK.

I LEFT Halle after some days, and came, in the month of May, 1799, to Berlin. Whoever is old enough to remember Berlin as it was at the close of the last century, would scarcely recognize it now. The suburbs, the city, the people, are all changed. I came thither with the most favorable prepossessions, and yet I was surprised at the grandeur of Potsdam, and the Prussian capital, and the splendor of the edifices. No one can enter Berlin at the Potsdam gate and not be impressed with the view. After being set down from the stage in which I had rode for two days and a night, I thanked God, and hurried to the Black Eagle, and was glad to touch a bed. I do not know how long I slept.

I had no address in Berlin; I knew no one, and had nothing which I could use to secure acquaintances, but the invitation of Reichardt to visit him at his lodgings. I did not hasten to avail myself of it. The day after my arrival I found a room in the

Königstrasse. My landlord supposed I had come to the city to see the great spring military review. In Leipsic, in Halle, everywhere, I had heard people talking about this review. My landlord was astonished at my telling him that I cared nothing for it. The regiments passed under my window the next day. I scarcely looked at them; and yet I must confess that the precision displayed, the perfect drill, struck me strongly. I had in my own land seen armies trained for use in times of war, and not for display in times of peace; so beautiful an exhibition of military pomp I had never seen. And yet I could not think with satisfaction on a land over which such an immense and perfectly trained army domineered, and whose liberties might be subverted at the bidding of a general. It seemed as if a nation which moved always under the shadow of such an army must grow into a shackled and servile manner of thought. I tried to get rid of such reflections, but I could not shake them off.

A young man who came to Berlin in those days was compelled to resort to a frivolous and profitless way of spending his time, such as now is no longer demanded. The young men whose acquaintance I incidentally made at the public places were not at all to my taste. I did not hasten to look up Reichardt, and spent a number of days entirely alone. Every one ~~must~~ confess that the street Unter den Linden, as one looks through the Brandenburg gate towards the palace, gives an almost unrivalled view. There is hardly another city where so many splendid buildings are crowded into the same space; the impres-

sion which the whole gives cannot be forgotten. As I wandered hither and thither, my mind was full of thoughts of this new city, so lately made prominent in European affairs, the capital of a kingdom so young, and which must have such a part yet to play in the history of the world. For the first time in my life I felt that I was confronting objects of huger magnitude and vaster interests than I had ever mingled with. My previous life seemed contracted and mean, and I could not persuade myself to make new acquaintances while I could muse on the great drama of European history. The very magnitude of the city oppressed me. The broad, regular streets repelled me, and all the impressions with which I came to the city were reversed.

Of course there was with all this an attractive side. Only twenty-six years had passed away since the Seven Years' War; it was not more remote to me when I was in Berlin than the Napoleonic wars are to me as I write these lines to-day. In earlier times I had been a great admirer of Frederick the Great, and although the French Revolution, occurring in my youth, had somewhat crowded him out of mind, yet, when at Berlin, the old feelings of admiration arose in their strength, as I looked upon a city which was to a good extent the work of his hands. Filled with these thoughts, I traversed the city in all directions. I visited the Cabinet of Minerals, the Botanic Garden, the Veterinary School, passing everywhere as a young man visiting the curiosities of the place. I called upon no distinguished personages, I made no interesting acquaintances. Fred-

erick Schlegel had left Berlin, Schleiermacher I did not visit; Tieck I fell in with by accident. This proud presence of Prussia's might was so baneful to me that I even felt as a stranger to myself. The Thiergarten was the place I loved most; its solitudes strongly attracted me.

I was several weeks in Berlin before I called on Reichardt. He was very busy. Parts of his *Brennus* were to be given as a concert, and he was very busy in the preparation. I had heard much about Reichardt, his skill as a composer, his ability as a writer, and his large circle of acquaintances. He had lived at court, I heard, and had exerted large influence, rather, however, in favor of others than in his own behalf. Almost everybody knew him. Every one whom I met had at some time or other had relations with him. Almost all the men of eminence in Germany, men of the most varied natures, had been or were still his friends. With Lavater and with Goethe he had long been on terms of intimacy. He had lived in France during the Revolution, and was acquainted with the leaders. His strong democratic leanings had made him obnoxious to the court, and, having been made director of the Salt Works at Halle, he lived at Giebichenstein in a kind of exile; and yet he made his home a centre of the most generous hospitality. People spoke warmly of the amiability of his family. No man of eminence came to Halle without visiting him. Ministers, generals, even princes, alighted at his door. To be noticed by him as I had been was no slight honor. And when at last I called upon him in

Berlin, I was astonished to learn how much he had been interested in me. He told me that he had inquired for me at the hotel where I had first lodged, but in vain ; and that he had wished to know my lodgings that he might introduce me into general society. I could only thank him, while I did not say that I had a secret pleasure in my solitary wanderings through the city, and in my meditations on Prussian history. At Reichardt's invitation, however, I was a guest at a brilliant supper, where I met Tieck, the poet, novelist, and sculptor. He was, in external appearance, a handsome, slim man ; his clear eye full of fire, his features expressive, while his judgments, given during the evening, were sharp and cutting, full of sense and power.

During the last days of my stay in Berlin, I met with a little adventure which did not tend to elevate the character of the people of that city in my sight. My allowance for travelling expenses was not meagre, and it had held out till now ; but I forgot to send for a remittance till my last copper was spent, and I was in considerable perplexity for want of money. I had fallen into the same trouble while on my foot tour through the Thuringian Mountains, but had been most unexpectedly relieved by falling in with an old Norwegian schoolmate. I could not hope to be so fortunate again. I could not expect a remittance for some weeks. In Berlin I knew no one, for Reichardt had returned to Halle. So at last I resolved to sell my watch, which was of some value. A stranger as I was in the city, I might have gone to the nearest watchmaker with-

out being known. But shame held me back, and I felt compelled to find one in the most distant quarter of the city. So I walked from King Street, where my room was, to the upper part of William Street, near the Halle gate, and when I found a watchmaker's shop, I went stealthily in, feeling like a thief, and offered to sell him my watch. He put me coarsely off, while I noticed that he carefully scrutinized it. At last he named a sum which was so insignificant that I indignantly demanded the watch. But he coolly retained it, looked at me from top to toe, asked my name, and where I had got the watch. "You are a stranger to me," he said, "and I do not know how you may have come into possession of the article." How I winced under his words I cannot express. I could not have felt more disgraced if I had actually stolen the watch. I really believed it necessary to give him a false name. But the man had gained his point; he had shamed me into horror. He gave me a trifling sum of money, and, full of humiliation, I left the shop, my watch gone, and only a pittance for it sufficient for the wants of a few days. The next day, as I was sitting down to dinner at the Black Eagle Inn, full of thought and perplexity, I discovered an old Norwegian friend. Was ever such good fortune! He had ample means, and was ready to help me at once. After I had recounted to him my adventure of the day before, we started together for the watchmaker's. I hoped to get my watch back. I confessed that I had given a false name to him, showed him my passport, offered him more than he

had given me, doubled the sum, but all in vain. He kept the watch. His cold-blooded manner, as he refused to surrender the article, enraged me more than the loss of the watch. I did not know then, as I did afterwards, that the law would have given it back to me at once, and so I lost it; yet, to confess the truth, it was not long before I forgot the whole affair.

By and by the expected money came from Copenhagen, and I left Berlin for Freiberg.

Certainly the first impressions of this city of miners were by no means agreeable. The mountains around had a dreary, desolate look, and the creaking of signs, and solemn tolling of a bell in some lofty tower, intimidated me. The prospect of making a long delay in Freiberg seemed gloomy enough. But after I had left the inn, and had found myself comfortably quartered in lodgings, the feeling of discontent soon wore away, and the city did not seem so dismal. The new occupation which was to engross me, the going into the very bowels of the earth, and laboring there for scientific ends, raised my curiosity, and I hastened to make the acquaintance of the two most eminent men of the city, Charpentier and Werner. I was not entirely unknown to them by name, for my paper on Mineralogy and its Study had awakened some interest in Freiberg.

The Mineralogical School of this city was now in its full glory. Werner stood confessedly at the head of his science in Europe, and was even regarded as its founder. No one could compare with

him in the knowledge of fossils, and Linnæus never stood more preëminently at the head of botany than did Werner at the head of mineralogy. It was conceded that the Neptunists had gained a decisive victory over the Vulcanists. From all parts of Europe and America, mineralogists streamed to Freiberg. Humboldt, Leopold von Buch, Esmark the Norwegian, Elyar the Mexican, Andrada the Brazilian, had been there a few years before. I found Irishmen, Scotchmen, and Frenchmen there, some of whom afterwards gained great eminence. Werner was then in the prime of his power, and was forty-nine years old.

He was a man of remarkable personal qualities, and gained an admirer in me at our first interview. He was of medium height, and broad-shouldered; his round, pleasant face did not promise much at first, and yet he commanded the attention of every one who addressed him. His eye was fiery; his features were full of expression when he spoke; his voice had a certain sharpness which was not so agreeable, but every word was well considered; the utmost clearness of conception and precision of thought were manifest in every sentence. And with all this he had so much goodness that he won all hearts.

Werner suffered from an affection of the stomach; he was, therefore, obliged to be very careful of his health. His clothing was very warm, and he always wore fur over his bowels. The climate in Freiberg is certainly rude, but I confessed I was not a little astonished to find him, in the month of July, keep-

ing a fire in his room. He was in all things most punctual, even to pedantry. He used to carry favorite scholars of his in his carriage to see some new and interesting field of inquiries. He was most exact about the time of starting; no one might come a minute too early, no one a minute too late. If you came too early, he would look at you inquiringly, then at his watch, and then go on with his work; if you came too late, even but a very few minutes, you would find him standing on the staircase, with his overcoat and fur collar in his hand, waiting for you. I used to be very particular to keep my watch exactly with his. I loved this great man with my whole heart, and he in turn was very kind to me, and cautioned me very faithfully about my own health.

I remember one circumstance in connection with Werner which I shall not forget. His collection of precious stones was one of the most perfect in Europe. In one of his lectures a drawer was passed round, containing jaspers. Every one, knowing Werner's great care, handled the drawer with the utmost delicacy, lest it should fall or be overturned. Accidentally it was struck by some one's arm; the gems were thrown into confusion, and for an instant it seemed as if some would fly out. It was an anxious moment. Werner turned pale, and could not speak. Happily no harm was done. It was seven or eight minutes before Werner could command his voice. "Do not be offended, gentlemen, that I am so much affected; in case of loss to my gems, the world could not replace them." The lecture was at

an end. Werner was not seen for two or three days; it was only by degrees that he could recover from such a shock.

Werner's great scientific excellence lay in his sharp discrimination of little points. No one could be clearer than he about all details. He compelled his hearers to equally exact habits; they must notice even the nicest shades and the minutest variations of form. Though he did not use mathematical formulæ in his classifications, yet he had a simple way of attaining almost as much exactness as if he had used them. His main excellence as a teacher lay in his demanding the closest attention to his views. If any scholar of his was about to make a mineralogical tour, Werner prepared a schedule of investigation for him, and expected that it would be followed to the letter. Whoever would profit by Werner's instruction must be undividedly Werner's disciple. The master so bound everything together in his system, that the scholar could not give up one point without seeing the whole fabric totter. I have never seen another man who held others in absolute subjection to his views. And he long lived to see his authority everywhere confessed. But it pained him in his old age to see the sceptre passing from his hands and new views usurping the place of his own.

It is singular how rarely men are able to express an accurate judgment upon the true place which an eminent scholar ought to take in history. Some are able to realize the condition of science in times earlier than their own, and to make allowance for the

obstacles which impeded great discoverers. They are able to prize at a true value the merit of a man like Werner, who not only lays the foundation of a new branch of science, but who develops it till it fills a large place in the eyes of men. Werner was to mineralogy what Linnæus was to zoology and botany. He found all his materials in the rudest state; he harmonized them and brought from them system and profit. And even the victories which were gained over him were gained by weapons which Werner had himself furnished to his antagonists. He published few books; but he committed his name and his reputation to hundreds of scholars, who will see that he receives only honor.

My life in Freiberg assumed new charms daily. I had become intimate in the family of Werner's great rival, the eminent Charpentier, one of whose daughters was married to General Thielemann, of the Saxon army, one to Dr. Reinhardt, the court preacher, of Dresden, while still another was betrothed to Hardenberg, or Novalis, to use the name most current in literature. My relations with the foreigners then at Freiberg were very agreeable. I was, indeed, very happy. I bought me a miner's suit, and could then go everywhere. Twice every week I made a visit into the mines. Werner advised me where to commence, and in which direction to proceed. This subterranean world had great attractions for me. It, indeed, cost me much toil to work on in the gloom, to study fossils and layers of rock, lighted only by the dim lamp which the miners use, and to bring out from moisture and dirt the

materials which I must examine. Hard it was, at the outset almost impossible, to follow the strata, and to see where they crossed and diverged again. And yet it was, indeed, a romantic kind of life to go down steep ladders into the earth, to see the blue sky fade away, to hear the wheels turning to pump up the waste water, and to hear the melancholy sound of the bell which strikes at each revolution. By and by I arrived at the most distant excavations. Strangers who came to Freiberg to study were admitted to all the mines excepting those which contain cobalt and arsenic. I found that this curious life did not lose its romantic air by familiarity with it, but, on the other hand, only grew in attractiveness. There was, indeed, hardly any limit to my researches, for the ground was excavated for miles around the city. The mines had been worked for five hundred years, and old shafts, running either perpendicularly or obliquely, and worked either partly or wholly, were everywhere to be found.

My fancy was, indeed, powerfully stimulated at Freiberg. When thousands of years have passed, what, I asked myself, will be left as a memorial of our times? What, that can be compared with Susa and Palmyra, with the Greek and Roman ruins, roads, and aqueducts? Our slightly-built cities will not exhibit a trace of what they were, our palaces will crumble, and our great factories will as thoroughly have passed away as their fabrics themselves. Here and there the ruins of a church, built in the middle ages, will testify to past architectural skill, but everything else which now looks so permanent

will have vanished. But even then these mines will testify to the labors of this age; these long shafts will bear witness to the skill and patience and great achievements of our times. Such fancies as these interested me greatly, and the life of the miners themselves had some attractions. They were a simple, peaceable race, very poor, and quite happy, but unable to lay up much store for the future. Of poetic fancy they did not seem to possess much. But everything connected with the mines interested me. I studied under Köhler's directions into the development of the once rich deposits of mineral wealth. It was plain that once the precious metals could be gleaned from the very surface of the ground. I saw how they had lessened and lessened down to the present time, till at last the toil of many days often yielded but little return. So, studying into all these things, the desolate aspect of the city and its surroundings did not trouble me, and, cheerless as they were, I was happy.

To speak the whole truth, only half of my mind was at Freiberg, the other half was at Jena. I kept up a correspondence with friends there, especially with Schelling, and from him I learned all that was transpiring. Meanwhile, Werner's scientific views grew in value to me. They contained elements on which I worked, and from which I was gradually evolving a system of my own. I communicated all that I thought to Werner. A man so set in his views as he was could not be happy at meeting ideas which at all conflicted with or were an outgrowth from his own. He spoke out his dis-

content, and his suspicion that there might something grow out of my system which might weaken public confidence in his theories. And yet, despite this, my intimacy with him grew closer. The esteem which I felt for him as a man, the respect which I had for his devotion to his special department, even the hope that his own views might be brought to a more complete development by me, bound me to him, and gave rise to relations between us which seldom exist between teacher and taught. And yet, such was the constitution of his mind that every attempt to show him what I had developed from his views seemed disagreeable to him, and apparently awakened the fear that he was to find in me one who would overthrow his theories, and rob him of his fame. And such was the influence which Werner exercised upon his pupils, that I began to be looked upon by them as a disturbing force, as a dangerous element in their midst.

I lived on terms of intimacy with the foreigners who were at Freiberg, especially with the Englishmen, Mitchell and Jameson. I was invited to deliver lectures on philosophy to them, and was glad to have an opportunity to speak of what was of so much interest to me. I commenced my course accordingly, and tried to make real to myself, as well as to my handful of hearers, the ideal side of philosophy, to show the parallelism between the real and the ideal, and how they are united in a higher unity. But I never succeeded in making my meaning clear to my hearers. I gained no disciples to philosophy in Freiberg. Indeed, that was the last place in the

world to make the attempt. Philosophy was too remote from the circle of studies pursued there, for mineralogy had to do alone with the world of sense. The Englishmen were curious to know what German philosophy is, and what it proposes to solve. But it was not comprehensible to them. They, caring for no evidence but that of the senses, and valuing no results but those which are gained by experiment and observation, satisfied with a religion which has a determinate and absolute value, and which lets the seen world and the unseen world touch each other, without being in unity, were not the men to comprehend our philosophy. I do not know to how great an extent the two Englishmen at Freiberg were religiously inclined. Upon such subjects the Englishman rarely expresses himself, and when he does, it is in the most practical way. It was curious to observe how difficult it was for my philosophical ideas to get a lodgement in the minds of my English friends at Freiberg, and how speedily they fitted away. I saw that it was in vain to continue my lectures, and soon gave them up. Only one man, and he a Pole, seemed to be interested in them. The Frenchmen, even those who in mineralogical studies were my constant companions, took no interest in my prelections; and so I was left to study Schelling by myself, and to think of Jena.

The young men who came to Freiberg from abroad used to run over to Dresden for recreation. I had once passed through that city, but made no stay, as I intended soon visiting and becoming acquainted with it. The beautiful environs, the

charming situation of the place, had pleased me at the first view, and I was delighted with the thought of returning thither. But I was so engaged with my studies at Freiberg that a couple of months passed before I felt at leisure to go to Dresden. It was about the end of August that a friend of mine joined me, and we hired a couple of saddle-horses, and journeyed to the city of art. It was a beautiful morning when we arrived. The sun was giving the spires their most brilliant appearance. We went directly to the inn, took a hearty breakfast, and then hastened to the gallery.

The lofty halls, crowded with pictures, had in my eyes an imposing look; the visitors, alone or in groups, traversed the apartments in an almost solemn silence. I was in a peculiar frame of mind, very much excited, and supposing that every picture which was allowed a place in the Dresden gallery must be a work of great excellence. The veteran Riedel was my guide, and tried to enlighten me on the merits of the various paintings, but I hardly heeded a word that he said. The pictures seemed to float before my eyes, and I walked from room to room like one in a dream. I wondered whether people could see in what a state of mind I was, and glanced at them to discover whether I was a subject of special remark. My feelings grew painful; my mind was overwrought, and I longed to get through and be in the air again. In my weakness I almost reeled. The pictures seemed to be animate, and the people around me seemed to be portraits without frames. Still the guide led me on and on. My

excitement was constantly increasing. At last we stood before a picture of uncommon size. A woman's figure seemed to be floating on clouds, and in her arms she bore a child whose face was of strange and ineffable beauty. My feelings had reached their height. I could bear them no longer, and I burst into violent and uncontrollable weeping. I tried to govern myself, for I felt that every eye was upon me, and at length I succeeded. And then I learned that the picture which had so moved me was the most celebrated of the gallery, the Madonna of San Sisto, Raphael's great work.

We were now in the last room, and I thanked God when we were fairly in the street again.

Dresden is one of the most delightful places in summer that I have ever seen. I have been there a great many times in all, but whether it has been rainy or fair, it has always seemed to me to be sunshine in Dresden. And not only is the city proper rich in attractions, but the environs are charming. You cannot go beyond the walls in any direction without passing through places of even romantic beauty. The number of strangers who flock thither relieves the somewhat prim manners of a German town, and infuses a certain genial character into the population. In no place could a stranger live in more perfect independence of the world than in Dresden; in no place could one surrender himself more completely to the humors of the hour than there. The English, who came thither in large numbers, even as long ago as at my first visit, at the opening of this century, used to lead in extra-

gances, and the young men among them acted like rude, unlicked bears. Dresden being not very large, humors could be allowed which would not be tolerated for a day in a great city like Berlin. It was just so at Freiberg. All the strangers there lived very much according to their will, while the people of the city were subjected to a rigid discipline which was in great contrast to our freedom. In fact, it was rather provoking, and the Freiberg folk could not conceal their irritation. For example, some of us students joined the English in having our dinner at five o'clock in the afternoon. The general dining hour at Freiberg was twelve, and, as we used to sit quite in an exposed view as we dined, being on the lower floor of a hotel, we used to be amused at seeing the people look in with curiosity upon us, and with some disgust at our oddly-chosen hour. In Dresden, the ways of strangers were not so much marked by the inhabitants, and so there was a delightful freedom.

So, with study at Freiberg and with recreation at Dresden, that summer and the following winter passed away, and so, too, did the next summer and the next autumn. It was one of the most delightful epochs of my life. I had exercise enough for my body, and the most delightful relations with a band of kindred spirits. I was always lively, and well do I remember the animated conversations of those long evenings which only terminated at midnight. It was a time, too, of great political movements. Bonaparte was on his return from Egypt, and

Europe was full of enthusiasm. I shall never forget those days.

Meanwhile the Philosophy of Nature was the great theme of scientific men, and was awakening universal attention and interest. Hardly any publication of a philosophical character has been seized upon so greedily as the first number of Schelling's Journal of Speculative Physics. Out of this publication, and one of my own, which came out at the same time, there arose a great contest, in which Schlegel, Schelling, and I were involved. I was most harshly attacked, and was even charged with the betrayal of confidence. I will not revive the memory of the contest, nor rake over the dead members of those times, but I was deeply pained at the whole affair.

Whoever knows my relations to the literature of Germany for the past forty years, knows how, at various times, even down to the present, I have been the subject of very bitter and envious attacks. I took a resolution at the beginning, to which I have always been true, that I would answer no attacks which were made upon my views as a whole, or upon the stand-point from which I proceeded. I am very sensitive, and when I read those attacks, they would almost make me sick. I would throw off fiery, unsparing replies, and believe that I had annihilated my assailant; but this warfare never went beyond my chamber; it never reached the press or the post-office. I saw clearer and clearer that attacks which proceeded from a want of understanding my position can never be answered; that a

defensive attitude is always an unfavorable one, and that if a man will lay the foundation of new positive ideas, the most feasible way is to go on with the quiet developing of them, and the complete ignoring of all attacks which grow out of not understanding him. All just and worthy replies were of great value to me. I quietly made use of them. Sometimes, when I felt myself personally wounded, but where the assailant was a man of large reputation, I have been untrue to my resolution, but I have always repented it afterwards. My position in literature was, therefore, always offensive rather than defensive; my indifference to envious attacks grew, and, in order to escape the disagreeable feeling which the first moment of reading a malicious charge produces, I resorted to a very simple but effective method, — not to read them at all. As the tone of parties grew worse and worse in the German literature, this method became more and more a necessity. The rough, unsparing, but praiseworthy criticism of thorough scholars, such as Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher, the bright and cutting wit which appears in Schlegel and Tieck, have disappeared, and their place has been assumed by a savage rudeness and sly innuendoes. I confess I used to take a kind of mischievous pleasure when I thought of some opponent sitting down to write an attack on me. He knew my sore side, and what would wound me the deepest. "Ah, that will sting him," he thinks, as he writes something very sharp, and rubs his hands together. Poor fellow! I never felt it. And, as even the worst side

of literature yet brings some profit, this style of insinuating, these pleasant flings, have been a source of a moment's merriment to the youth and the intellectual ladies who busy themselves with the scientific journals. But what harm did it all do? Praise and blame are both equally harmless. Whoever has a work to do which absorbs the energies of his whole being, is spending his happiest days. He can build on in peace, and cherish the thought that he is doing a work which shall not perish; he knows that not merely the passing day, but that history has, through him, gained new ideas; if his work is to him something precious and sacred, he cannot only bear attacks with indifference, but can even be patient with his weaknesses, while he seeks to battle with and overcome them. I must confess that the attacks of adversaries have been in no way injurious to the development of my conceptions, and have in no way hindered my giving to the future what shall be of permanent worth. I hold it for true that the power of the censor over journals and the ephemeral forms of literature is of little avail. I once called it a kind of perpetual slaughtering of the babes of Bethlehem to kill the Saviour, whom yet all miss. I asked the censors to strike out no lines in the writings of those who attacked me, were the assaults ever so bitter. I told them that they did not affect me at all. And in general, I may say, what in science can be destroyed by personal attacks is not worth saving. The diamond must be tried by the hammer, and I did not wish to make any cherished dream of mine a law to the world.

without its truth being well proved. I have dwelt thus fully upon my manner of dealing with my opponents, because it has been my method through my whole life. I have never been able to comprehend why a man should take any course but the most careful doing of his own work. I can well understand how one can feel himself drawn to labor on year after year alone, as my friend Schelling did, beyond all the clamor of men. My social disposition denied that privilege to me.

Meanwhile the scope of men's sympathies was, ever widening, and reaching out to all departments of science, and to all the forms of poetry. That difference between ancient and modern times, between the classic eras and the eras of romance, which lies at the foundation of every criticism of works of mind or art, has received a sharp delineation at the hands of Frederick Schlegel, in his work on the Poetry of the Greeks and Romans, and is now generally recognized. In this task of discrimination between two great historical epochs lay a vast mass of observations to be gone through, and to men's minds the results have been made more or less clear, according to the time and patience which they had given to the subject. For myself, the difference of which I speak lay predominantly in the strong development of *personality* which characterizes modern times, and which pervades modern poetry ; and this view grew clearer and stronger in my eyes as I began to regard it as one of the results of Christianity. I saw that in it lay one of the principles on which history should rest, and that it was

but a confirmation of the great work of my life, the harmonizing of the effects which nature exerts upon character, individual and national, with those which all the other agencies bring into the same field.

I found that the further my reading extended back into the poetry of the middle ages, the stronger my interest grew. To the great services which Tieck has rendered to the world may be added this, that it is mainly through his efforts that general attention has been called to the rich treasures of the old German literature. It is well known what a great interest was awakened by Goethe's treatise on German Art, wherein he drags Strasburg Minster out from the rubbish which had covered it, and reveals its true beauty. This treatise, and his Goetz von Berlichingen, had rescued the race from the settled self-complacency which reigned, and set it to inquiring what treasures of art and taste were known to a past age which we had always been in the habit of regarding as destitute of both. Since Bodmer's time, the Nibelungen-Lied and other works of the oldest German poetry had been subjected to protracted study and profound inquiries, but a general interest in them had not been awakened, nor was there a thorough appreciation of their excellences. With Tieck I was not yet on terms of close intimacy; and upon this subject he had not then published much; still from him had already gone forth that interest in the old German writers which was afterwards to gain so strong a hold on the public mind. I now began to hear of the wondrous old poetry, of an epic which in tragic power and in

artistic skill would rival the productions of ancient classic times. It gave me intense pleasure as the new world opened before me, and I found, too, that the oldest and most renowned of these poems pointed to my own native land, and displayed kindship with the ancient Scandinavian songs of gods and heroes. What I learned was certainly fragmentary. But this new world stood before me and beckoned to me as from afar. It lay like a rich treasure in my view, and absorbed my whole nature in efforts to make it mine.

And while poetry and art were enlisting my interest more and more, while Bonaparte's return from Egypt, his victory at Marengo, his power widening more and more at Paris, made him the great and towering object of his time; in that epoch of fermentation, of excitement, that epoch which could be compared with the most celebrated of antiquity, I lived in my little circle of kindred spirits, sharing with them a common life, and uniting in all their sympathies. All the new combinations of men and their enterprises did not reach me. I looked upon them, indeed, but with no eager interest; for while among things past German poetry engaged me, among things present it was enough to observe the flashing career of Napoleon.

But not mining, nor metaphysics, nor literature alone engrossed my entire attention while I was at Freiberg. The important discovery of the pile of Volta, and so of galvanism, was made during that time, and stirred the whole scientific world. I had received quite a large sum of money from Den-

mark; enough to enable me to procure a battery of not insignificant size. There is always something affecting in entering upon a newly-opened and mysterious department of science. It made a deep impression on me, and the more so because these wonderful revelations could not in any way be attributed to accident. It was interesting to see from how slight an origin so vast a discovery proceeded, and to view result after result follow in regular succession. The pile of Volta has become to one department of science what Kepler's laws have become to another.

I experimented from morning to evening with my battery. Some little discoveries which I made, and which now seem of little moment, delighted me beyond measure. I was the first to analyze ammonia; and it seems singular, as I look back to the scientific journals of those times, to find that I also was the first to kindle phosphorus with the battery. Everybody in Freiberg was interested in what I was doing. Werner and Charpentier came in to see the wonderful thing. At some hours of the day my room was crowded with students. The ladies, even, honored me with their presence. This new source of interest engrossed me for a long time, but at length it, too, lost its charms.

But I turned to still another work of magnitude and of importance; for in Freiberg I wrote and published my papers<sup>1</sup> on the Natural History of the Interior of the Earth.

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zur inneren Naturgeschichte der Erde.*

What I tried to develop in this work was the ground-thought of my whole life. Years before I had begun to dream of it by night, and to turn it over and over by day. Even when a student of Spinoza, the conception of a hidden unity running through all living things had charmed me. As I grew older, the conception strengthened, and the hope arose within me of giving the study of physics greater value and interest. For this thought I was indebted to Schelling. But I could not content myself with the mere abstract thought. From my childhood up, nature has spoken to me as if it were a living thing. I could even read in it what seemed to be a deep process of thought. It seemed to be trying to speak out not only what the Creator thought, but what he wished to do with his thought. In the system of Spinoza, God has his true greatness granted to him. Schelling, too, had placed God at the head of the universe. I questioned all the facts of experimental science to enlarge my knowledge of the Creator. I sought to know whether all those things which from my childhood up had wrought so powerfully upon me did really bear the traces of a divine mind. That was the hope which led me on, and I never gave up the search. I felt deeply, most deeply indebted to Schelling; but yet it was plain that my book was, to some degree, a new contribution to science; that it developed a new, rich, and unworked vein of thought. And for it I felt that I was indebted to another great teacher, to Werner himself. If Schelling gave me the grand thought, the conception of the Eternal, the One who embraces

all things in his thought, Werner awoke in me the hope of introducing this conception into the study of nature as a working force, one which should display the existence not of mere passive being, but of will and of purpose to do. This would give rise to a new view of history in its relations to God, and of what I called the natural history of the interior of the earth. It is weak language to say that through the influence of physical conditions human actions assume their character. Man is *wholly* a product from the hands of nature. Only in his being this wholly—not partly, but wholly—do we confess that in him nature centres all her mysteries. And so it became plain to me that natural science is bringing a new element into history, which is to become the basis of all knowledge of our race. History and nature must be in perfect concord, for they are really one. Nature's highest and completest manifestations are in the deeds of history. My book was undertaken rather in youthful zeal than in cool judgment, and yet I sought to make the best I could, and to keep to my main thought. I tried to impart a unity to all being, which had not before been granted, and thus to give science a greater value both for the present and the future. Not so much to reduce some phenomena into harmony with special hypotheses, but to unite *all* phenomena, and from this union to find the traces of a Divine Mind ruling over and unfolding all, in His own good time, — *this* was the object of my book.

Men had already begun to feel that science ought to be made less dry, and that to accomplish this it

must be more closely linked to life. Schelling was calling forth more activity of mind than had been witnessed since the most flourishing days of Greek philosophy. And my work was published just at the time when men's minds were in their full glow, and I well remember that it made a strong impression. It was confessed that I was not a novice in science. A general wish prevailed that I might be the means of giving a wider range to speculation, and that our most eminent naturalists might both continue their observations with as much rigidness as ever, and yet with a higher aim.

I will not go into detail as to the contents of the book. Enough to say, that its main thought has been confirmed by one with whom my name may not be brought into comparison, the immortal Cuvier. Science has made so much progress since my work was published, that many of my minor positions are now overthrown; yet the main points stand, and will stand. My views have been further developed, but not set aside; and in the present state of science I recognize them, enlarged and restated, indeed, but still in essence there.

The impression which the book produced had a reflex influence upon me. For the first time in my life my fond dreams had had a fulfilment, and a work of mine had been given to the inspection of the great world. Schelling recognized my views as embodying what was essential to his philosophy. The influence which my production had upon his second article in the *Journal of Speculative Physics* he did not seek to deny,—he himself confessed

it. Every one who was devoting himself to the study of nature hailed my work as instituting a new epoch in its development. Young enthusiasts expressed themselves in regard to its extravagant tone, and even the strongest opponents spoke out their pity that a young man, who was so thoroughly the master of the experimental sciences, should give himself over to the vague fancies of speculation. It was interesting to see the two extremes of criticism in contrast — that of the exaggerating praise in the Saltzburg Medical Gazette, and that of undeviating blame in the General German Repository. Freisleben regarded the book as a mere geognostical commentary on Werner's treatise on the slate and chalk formations. I had thought, in my innocence, that it was something more than this. Frederick Schlegel found fault with the want of a blending of experimental results with philosophical hypotheses. And when I saw that his want of scientific knowledge denied him the power of combining two things so different, it is easy to see that in my sight such a uniting of the experimental with the speculative as should reconcile all antagonisms, and give perfectness to my work, was a result that was not only a worthy goal for my humble faculties, but even for the highest efforts of the most exalted minds.

## CHAPTER V.

FREDERICK SCHLEGEL — WIT AND WITTY MEN — GOETHE'S COMPREHENSIVENESS — NOVALIS — STEFFENS'S HUMILIATION — HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH TIECK — EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY — RETURN TO DENMARK — LEAVING GERMANY — COPENHAGEN — KIND RECEPTION — GOETHE'S INVITATION — STEFFENS COMMENCES A COURSE OF LECTURES — HIS MARRIAGE — MARRIED LIFE AND DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES — BETTER PROSPECTS.

WHILE at Freiberg I took a foot journey to Jena, where I became acquainted with Frederick Schlegel, who was then staying with his brother. He was in every respect a remarkable man, slender in figure, his features regular, fair, and in the highest degree expressive. He had a very quiet manner, I might call it almost phlegmatic. When he sat in his chair, sunk in meditation, and was developing a great thought, he used to embrace his forehead with his thumb and fore finger, and then draw them gradually together till they met just above his delicately-formed nose; then, as he became still more deeply absorbed in his reverie, his finger would pass down to the end of his nose, till at last it lay directly along its back, pointing into the air. He spoke slowly and thoughtfully. I united myself to him in very close ties. Although I felt that our views were very unlike, yet I forgot that every moment; for it is very singular how near people come together in

results which they have reached in the most different ways. Schlegel lived wholly in history. He had no eye for natural beauty; indeed, the ability to enjoy landscapes was wanting to both the brothers. Such a deficiency in two so gifted men was very surprising to me; it was unaccountable. It is well known that in Lessing and William Humboldt there was wholly wanting an ear for music.

There could hardly be a man more capable of wielding a strong personal influence than Frederick Schlegel. He grasped every subject which was presented to him in its whole length and breadth. He could even pass at once into the comprehension of my ideas on natural philosophy; but all his writings show that he was unable to gain a full insight into the workings of nature. His wit was inexhaustible and happy; and he belonged to those who understand what wit really is.

It is well known that wit and acuteness are often brought into contrast, and that it is generally insisted that they mutually exclude each other. The man devoid of wit, who, because he is accustomed to call himself sharp-sighted, is inclined to give the preference to keenness, believes that a witty man cannot be acute; and yet it must be confessed that both faculties, where they exist in a sound and active state, presuppose each other. Whoever grasps *in an instant* all the relations of a subject and masters them at once, he has wit. This *immediate* grasping is necessary; it must come without a moment's pause. It is not the seeing of dim analogies, not the conceiving of things in their unity, that

makes wit. Wit must see all this without delay; to be wit, it must be immediate. Wit is the child of the moment. The difference between wit and sharp-sightedness lies in the time which is needed to grasp all the relations of a subject. Wit pounces upon them and startles you into laughter; acuteness takes them with quickness, indeed, but not as in a twinkling. Wit reads to you as by the lightning's flash; acuteness by the full glory of day. Wit is keenness highly animated and intensified.

I learned what I know of this subject, and which I have rather hinted at in the last paragraph than fully expanded, from Frederick Schlegel, who was an excellent judge of the quality of wit. I often observed in the course of my experience of life that the most sharp-sighted men are the wittiest men; and that the wit which is deepest, and therefore only appreciated by the few, is that which comes from the keenest view. This was true of Shakespeare; and so of the men whom I knew,—Goethe, the Schlegels, Tieck, Schleiermacher, Wolf, were equally distinguished by acumen and wit. Their wit implied their acumen. Who discriminated with so keen an eye as Talleyrand, and who was wittier than he?

Frederick Schlegel could take the highest delight in true wit, even if it was stinging him through. Flatness was in the last degree distasteful to him. He used to say that you can judge best of the grasp and depth of a man's mind by seeing what kind of wit pleases him. Kant, he said, showed in his *Anthropology* that he knew the nature of genuine

wit. And, indeed, not merely in that treatise, but in his whole writings, wit abounds.

Wit is very nearly allied to poetry. And poetry was almost identified by Schlegel with religion, and put in its place. That was only too apparent. That is why irony had such a value with him; irony being poetry and wit in combination, figurative wit. That serious way of looking at things as they are, that characterized Schelling, seemed to the unsettled spirit of Schlegel<sup>1</sup> as too severe a matter; he would not confront threatening realities.

It needs but to throw a glance over the vast scope and great value of the efforts put forth in all directions to comprehend the fact that no century was ever ushered in with more promise than the nineteenth. What seemed to be going forward in the course of a peaceful development, could not resist the sway of this new activity. All men who were working in the interest of science formed a close alliance, for they saw that, though their paths were different, their goal was one.

In a period so rich Goethe was seen in his true light. The poet had an interest in every new scientific development. If Wolf in Halle opened a new way in the treatment of the classic authors, and founded a deeper school of criticism; if he laid his hand upon the old Greek Epic and dissected Homer, the poet of Weimar stood by with warmest

<sup>1</sup> It may here be mentioned that Frederick Schlegel is the author of the well-known witticism that *all cats are black in the dark*. Originally it was an ironical attack on Schelling's doctrine of absolute identity.—TRANS.

approval. If Gries basied himself with the Italian writers, and A. W. Schlegel and Tieck with Shakespeare, Cervantes and Calderon, they only advanced and widened the studies of the all-comprehending Goethe. If the Grimms disclosed with enthusiasm the depths of the old German and Scandinavian literature, it was Goethe who first grasped the worth of their discoveries, and followed with eager interest the opening path which led to the discovery of new treasures in the past. And investigations, too, whose value was concealed from the most active spirits around him, early claimed his attention. As truly as he belonged to the world of poets, did he belong to the ranks of men who consecrate themselves to science. But the tie which unites all scientific inquirers, and gives them all a common quality, the philosophy of nature, drew him the most strongly; and he could not deny the worth of any science, even if its details had not been mastered by him. The spirit first called out by Schelling caught even those who meant to ignore it, and a new manner of speech crept into all the sciences, and it became apparent to all that those which seemed to lie remote from each other had an inner connection, and that a close and vital one. So infinitely rich was that time that the present seemed linked as never before to future and to past; it seemed as if no epoch in history was so full of hope. And I, stimulated on all sides, found myself excited to the most varied, most living activity. Many things were hidden from my knowledge, much I could see in the misty distance; but the vital forces which were moving around me

gave me a feeling of kinship to those engaged in the most diverse studies of nature.

In Jena I also became acquainted with Novalis. I had heard much said about him. There was scarcely a man whose acquaintance I was more desirous to make. I met him first at the house of Frederick Schlegel, in whose arms he died a few years after. His appearance was rather too sleek to be very promising; his clothing was very simple, and his presence was not suggestive of a man of great eminence. He was tall, spare, and had a hectic flush that boded no good. His countenance was dark. His thin lips, sometimes, indeed, ironically smiling, but generally retaining a serious, earnest expression, indicated the greatest sweetness and friendliness of nature. But above all was the lambent glow of his deep, spiritual eye. He was wholly a poet. All existence was to him mythic. Everything around him seemed to look out from a more ethereal atmosphere than ours. He cannot, indeed, be called a mystic in the common acceptation of the word, for such look from the world in which they find themselves placed, into another and more mysterious world where new activities are at work. But to Novalis this other mysterious world was home, and from it he looked out upon our more common habitation. And this mythical element which prevailed in him gave him an intuitive insight into the relations of science, of metaphysics, of the fine arts, and even into the character of the most gifted men. And so the charm of his language and the harmony of his style were not things acquired, they were born

with him ; and so, too, he could turn with equal ease to science and to poetry, and into his tales he could so weave the subtlest and the deepest thoughts that the story would seem incomplete without the philosophy, and the philosophy incomplete without the story. Such productions as the *Lehrlinge zu Sais*, and *Heinrich von Osterdingen*, must have produced a profound impression, for the same spirit seemed to be native to them which it is the work of philosophy to impart after long effort has been made to reach it. Novalis used to express himself with the greatest freedom on all subjects, and he himself insisted that philosophy should have a method of investigation, *out of* which rather than *by means* of which he should instruct others ; and in saying that he was simply showing what was habitual with himself.

In large gatherings or in the company of strangers he sometimes sat perfectly silent, lost in his thoughts. His sensibilities were so acute that he could detect the presence of natures not in unison with his ; but where he found kindred spirits, he gave himself up to the hour, spoke freely and at length, and appeared very excited and happy.

I saw him in Jena only a few days, but met him afterwards in Freiberg, where he visited at the mineralogist Charpentier's, to whose daughter he was betrothed. He took a deep interest in the ideas which were then filling my mind. My view of nature seemed to him of great value, and to promise much for the future. What I read of his, what I saw in him, what I experienced with him, was to

the course of my life what the accompaniment is to a melody, or rather like an echo from distant mountains, which gave back to me in louder and distincter utterance what I scarcely ventured to speak.

I have since then fallen in with men who seemed to be entirely governed by him; men who were severely practical, naturalists and experimental inquirers who prized highly what is deep and mysterious in life, and who believed that in his writings they had found the solution of the problem of existence. The blending of religion and poetry in the writings of Novalis was to them the utterance of an oracle, and in those writings they profess to have found the same strengthening and comfort which Christians find in the Bible.

In truth, Novalis was religious in the deepest sense. It is well known that from his pen have come hymns which belong to the noblest that the church of Christ possesses. He had, as is well known, a strong leaning towards Catholicism, and he has done more, perhaps, than any other to lead youth to that form of faith. Notwithstanding the publication of his defence of the Jesuits, I feel persuaded that he was a firm believer in man's moral freedom, and in salvation through grace, the grand principle of the Protestant church.

No other one has ever been to me in things religious what Novalis was. The deep and earnest faith which had been brought home to me in my childhood began to revive again while I was with him, and entered into all my inquiries, taking the

first place there, and demanding to be made the basis of all my work in life.

Before I go on to speak of the eminent men whom it has been my privilege to know, I have one or two confessions to make to the reader. It was about the time of which I am now writing that I discovered that passions which I despised in others I was in no wise free from. On a geological tour I happened to come to Carlsbad. Games of hazard were strictly forbidden there, yet they were played in secret, and in some way, which I do not now remember, I found myself one evening in the gambling-room. I saw men at the faro-table who evidently belonged to the better class. The varying passions of the players interested me, yet I thought that if I were in their place I could command myself as they could not. I will play a little, I thought, and when I gain or lose a few pieces I will stop. Those fierce passions which I saw displayed around me I certainly could not have. So I began, as everybody does, with the smallest sum. I was successful. I doubled it; fortunate again. I still increased, and still had the winning side; and so I played till far into the night, and gained a not inconsiderable sum. I can remain here a number of days, I thought. The next evening found me again at the faro-table. My fortune remained true to me, and I stayed three weeks there, and was constantly successful. I did not have great and bewildering strokes of fortune, but still my gains were constantly growing, and every addition to them delighted me. There is something bewitching in the game. The intricate

combinations set the whole imagination in activity. We dream that behind the arbitrary cast some mysterious power is at work, which once enlisted on our side will always remain true to us. The great sums of money which lie upon the open table and pass to and fro, make us forget the value which we elsewhere, in common life, put upon it. A gold piece there is nothing. We seem to be masters of gigantic fortunes, and we act as if we were dealing with the fabulous treasures which we conjure up in our dreams. It is a strange, dark, fearful figure, the goddess of the gambling-table, which at first makes us shudder, and seduces us away and holds us fast.

At other places I was accustomed to meet with men, as my associates, who were wholly busied with intellectual pursuits. Among these men were some of the noblest spirits of the age. A dim remembrance of this followed me, and at last it became a constant torment; but it called me to myself. I asked myself, Who are my companions now? Pseudo-officers, needy adventurers, were the ones who had found in me a friend. I thought with a shudder on the blazè appearance, the indifference which they expressed about anything noble or holy, the dreadful levity with which they looked upon everything which I valued,—and yet I had been living for three weeks in the society of these men. How common they seemed to me now! How shameful I felt in my degradation. Tears started from my eyes. I leaped up at once,—it was in the night,—ordered a post-chaise, and hurried from the place, and from that time to this I have not been within a gambling-

room. In flight was my only security, but I was happily saved just in time.

But I was not yet out of trouble. I still had the money which I had gained, but it was my curse. At Kostritz I stopped at an inn where was tarrying a company of strolling actors. There were not many guests, and so I became quite intimate with them. My money went freely for wine and costly entertainments. My usual sense seemed to have been taken from me, and one day I descended to the step of proposing to join them as a fellow-actor. They were delighted, and applauded my resolution to the echo. I remained with them for days, utterly insensible to the meanness of my company, till at last the happy thought occurred to me that by and by the name of Dr. Steffens, the strolling actor, would get to Denmark, and be even heard in Copenhagen. I tried to fancy the emotions which such an event would awaken, and I was a second time shamed into sense again. Meantime I had whistled my money all away. I was ready to start on my journeys again, a wiser if a poorer man.

I allude to this humbling of my confidence in myself, merely to paint anew the moral of a tale which will be repeated to the end of time, namely, that no youth of spirit is safe in tampering with tools which thousands of men as wise and strong as he have turned to their own destruction. And now I go on with the story of my life.

I returned to Dresden, where I met Tieck, the poet, novelist, and sculptor, and became acquainted with his family. He was then living in Dresden.

Tieck was of my age, twenty-eight years. He was tall, spare, and handsome, while his eyes were of wonderful clearness and power. In all his movements there was grace and delicacy; his manner of speaking exactly corresponded to his bearing. He wrote hardly more beautifully than he spoke. It is not alone the clearness with which he grasps every subject which he handles that charms us, it is the harmonious roundness of his style which has such irresistible fascination. In talking, his manner was to carefully grasp his theme, and then to develop it on every side, yet with a restrained enthusiasm, through which his language caught a warmth which seemed to come rather from the subject of conversation than from the man who talked. He himself has told me that when, in the higher circles, he has been compelled to listen to a depreciation of what is noblest in poetry,—when, for example, he has heard scorn thrown on the chief excellences in Goethe,—he has felt himself as one transformed. Such indignation was fired in him that he would turn pale; but he had such command of himself that in circumstances where I should have answered in ~~heat~~, he could keep perfect silence. And such was the effect of this in Tieck, that I have seen his most bitter enemies entirely disarmed by his significant silence. And I venture to assert, gentle and approachable as he was to all, he has, by his bearing when in society, exercised even a stronger influence than by his writings. What he was to me, during an intimacy continued for many years, and under

the most varied circumstances, and in spite of broad differences of opinion, I cannot easily express.

Tieck was remarkable for his talent in mimicry. Had he been trained for the stage, he would have been the greatest actor of his time ; and even in his old age, when, chained to his chair by the gout, he read a play to a few friends, it was so real, that what we might see at the theatre appeared frigid and dull, while the true genius of the drama seemed to be before us.

I have seen him, on the birthday of his wife, extemporize a play, and take every part himself, assuming characters as far apart as a man and an ourang-outang, and while his audience was convulsed with laughter, he was true to his plot and to all the minutiae of expression and of feature. I could scarcely credit my eyes at so remarkable a display of histrionic talent.

Frederick Schlegel was then in Dresden, and for months I lived in daily intercourse with him and with Tieck. How rich that season was to me it is hard to say, for the influence of a man like Schlegel cannot be measured as an abstract thing ; it is not merely a communicable quality, it works powerfully upon the whole nature. We do not feel ourselves fettered by his presence, but rather quickened by it; our brightest thoughts are then stimulated into being, and the more powerful the mind which is exerting this influence over us, the more free seems to be the motion of our own mind. In the companionship of Schlegel and Tieck I began to understand the fine arts. I learned how to trace the primitive

conception in the elaborate and finished work, the simple in the complex and modish, the nature of true art in the perversions of the schools. The great political epochs of the Italians, the Spanish, the English, and the Germans, were brought near to me. I was even transferred to their midst. I enjoyed the past as if it were the present, and every day brought me new delights.

Those were all golden moments. I had now been a long time in Germany, and had traversed it in all directions. The ease with which I made acquaintances, and the readiness with which I sympathized with their joys and troubles, had made the circle of my friendships very large. In Dresden, hardly a day passed in which I did not meet with some old acquaintance, with whom I could talk over past times and enjoy a cheerful hour in the present. I learned during these delightful months what a charm there is in living a life of perfect freedom from care, and yet a life rich in adventure, where I could explore any department of knowledge that I wished, and could link myself to every good and noble object. And at the close of the year, when I looked back upon it, it seemed to belong among the choicest that I had lived. It had another value, too, besides those which I have already mentioned. Reichardt's daughter, then seventeen years of age, came to Dresden, to visit her aunt, Tieck's wife. To what this acquaintance led will be seen in the sequel.

I had dedicated my collection of papers to Goethe. On account of this I had to endure a great deal

from Frederick Schlegel. The Delphian Temple of Higher Poesy, to which I had consecrated my book, gave him occasion for a great deal of ridicule. As there was much said in it of the essential oneness of all metals, he insisted that I ought to have subscribed myself as minister extraordinary of metallics, and privy counsellor of the metals. But Goethe took a warm interest in my production. He wrote me a long letter, and what interested me especially in it was, his telling me that he had tried the experiment with a French naturalist, whether he were able to follow the whole course of my observations, and to bring the metals of which I spoke into important relations with each other, and into real unity. Goethe was convinced that the Frenchman would make nothing of it. The gift of tracing such things he insisted was wholly wanting to the French mind, and he foresaw exactly what kind of a reception writings such as mine would receive in France; and not in France alone, but among all those naturalists of Germany whose method is only experimental. And I have experienced all my life what he distinctly foresaw, and if some view of mine has gained acceptance in one quarter or another, yet the spirit which lay at the base of all my results has not been appreciated. Yet my great admiration of natural science, my interest in their discoveries, my joy at their progress, have always been great. I have known enough to bear always in mind that natural science can stand on its own foundation. I have been separated from empirical naturalists through the diversity of our principles of research,

yet the object studied is the same to us both, and many ties still connect us in our inquiries. Often have I had occasion to say in my arguments with distinguished physicists, who confessed that they could not understand the drift of my thoughts, that I enjoyed a double advantage, in that the enjoyment of their discoveries was not denied to me, and their progress a source of joy to me, while from their results a pleasure was granted to me which was not even granted to those who had gained them. I never underrated their results, but as they were purely the issues of experiments, they who gained them could not always see in them the workings of great and universal laws.

And now it was time for me to be thinking of home. I had an account to render in Denmark for the months spent in Germany. It was, indeed, hard to leave a land which I had learned to love so much, and turn away from friends who had become so dear to me. But just then, while I was thinking of my journey homeward, I received an invitation to accept a professorship of mineralogy in Ireland. It was procured for me through the agency of Mitchel, a fellow-student at Freiberg. It was a very attractive offer; the salary seemed very large to me, and Ireland was as yet an unexplored field. But my want of English was in my eyes a good reason for not accepting the offer. I read it, indeed, with ease, but I have never mastered its pronunciation. Mitchel insisted, however, that three months in an English family would remedy that defect.

This unexpected invitation was, of course, taken

into most careful consideration. But at last my affection to my native land prevailed, and I came to the conclusion that I owed my service to her. I refused the invitation, and so changed the whole future of my life.

So I turned my steps towards the home of my childhood. What my career there would be could not clearly be foretold. I hoped to give philosophical lectures in Copenhagen. I had intended, when I left Denmark, to extend my travels to Italy, France, and England, and yet I had confined myself to Jena, Weimar, Freiberg, and Dresden. In this limited region, I had met the objects of my highest admiration; here my thoughts had found rich soil from which to grow. I could not think without sadness of leaving a country which had become so full of interest to me. Even the language, the repository of pure thoughts, had an endless charm to me, and a wonderful harmony. No other tongue seemed to me to speak out so well the emotions of the soul, no other to present the most sharply-defined thoughts, the most lofty poetry. Yet, sad as was the leaving of Germany, the thought of home was cheering. I was wholly a Dane. The great purpose of my life was to be useful to my country. And so I turned my back upon beautiful Dresden, bade adieu to my many friends, and started northward, going by Jena and Halle. At Jena, I found Schelling and Hegel united in a common task, and on terms of close intimacy, and I could not part without tears from the one of these two men whose genius had summoned me to Ger-

many, and had given a new direction to my life. Schelling, too, was sensibly moved. At Halle I was taken into Reichardt's family as an intimate friend, and there was betrothed to the daughter, with the understanding that in one year I should return and claim her as my wife. After a few happy days at Halle, I again set my steps towards home; reached Lubeck, and took the packet for Copenhagen.

Few men have enjoyed a happier youth than I. I was now in my thirtieth year, and if I deduct two sad twelvemonths, the rest had flown by in unbroken quiet. I do not remember that ever in all that time I had one anxious thought about the future. The present was rich in happiness, and I did not despise the joys of the hour. I was completely my own master, independent in the full sense of the word. Every one who met me was friendly. I stood in no man's way, and few had occasion to look on me with envy. I expected, indeed, sooner or later, to have my share of trouble; but of the calamities which at length drove me from my native land, no glimpse yet appeared. I went home at a very critical time in the history of Denmark. It was just after the English invasion, and the attack on Copenhagen. The whole city, at the time I arrived, was just becoming tranquil after the intense excitement of the battle, and I, who expected to entertain rather than to be entertained, was glad to listen day after day to stories of the Danish valor, and the various occurrences incident to so startling an event. All that I had

seen sunk into insignificance compared with what had been witnessed at home. But by and by the excitement wore away, and common interests crowded forward again and claimed attention.

The events which had taken place in my life while in Germany, exercised an influence upon my prospects at home. Count Schimmelmann received me with the same cordiality which he had showed me before my departure. It was a great advantage to enjoy the favor of a man who had such control of the finances of the kingdom, and who was so enlightened a scholar and so constant a patron of science. I told him of my call to Ireland, and of my refusal to accept it, and he thereupon granted me a pension ample for my support as long as I was unmarried, with the promise that it should be more than doubled after my marriage. He allowed me also to select my own department of labor. I then showed him what was the course which I had marked out for myself. It was merely to give public lectures on philosophy and on geognosy. My object was to make these subjects as attractive as possible, and to attach my hearers to myself, and especially such as would hereafter be government officials or ministers in the desolate villages of Norway. I thought that I should thus be opening resources to them which should give them a never-failing subject of interest in the scenes of their future labors.

The plan pleased the Count, who praised its simplicity. And after this my relations with him grew more intimate, and had I depended upon him alone I should never have left Denmark.

If I was made happy by the kindness of Schimmelmann, my joy was not lessened by a letter which I soon received from Goethe. It was the intention of the literary circle to which I was so closely bound, to establish a Review at Jena, to which Goethe, Schleiermacher, Tieck, Schlegel, and Schelling, should be the chief contributors. It was to be based on the metaphysical system of the last named, and was to be mainly devoted to a connecting of Schelling's philosophy with the literature of the day. And Goethe's object in writing to me was to propose that I should contribute a critical summary of that philosophy to the first number of the Review. I confess that I was equally surprised and gratified at the invitation. Unquestionably it was extended through Schelling's influence, and that was a touching proof of the confidence which he had in my mastery of his system; but, despite all this, I had to decline the request. The fall was approaching, and it was necessary for me to give my whole time to the preparation of my course of lectures. I was going to do my own work in Copenhagen well, and the preparing of an article which should be worthy of the subject would demand time which I could not give.

But there soon began to appear a disagreeable side to my life. If I could look to Count Schimmelmann for countenance and support, there was another high official from whom I expected nothing but opposition. This was the Duke of Augustenburg, brother of the king. He was wholly in the interest of the conservative party; he looked with

special distrust at the new philosophy of Germany, and spoke of it with great contempt. A reactionary Review at Berlin, Nicolai's, noticed for its hostility to the Weimar and Jena school, attacked me in a violent and abusive way, not only charging me with adopting a foolish philosophical system, but, what was more painful to my feelings, with taking money which the Danish government granted to me for geognostical studies, and applying it to uses so variant from this as the sustaining of transcendental philosophers. Nicolai's Review was read at Copenhagen, and the article was shown to the Duke of Augustenburg. He summoned me to him, and showed me very plainly that I need hereafter expect no help from him. In his eyes it was a serious matter that I had been attacked by Nicolai. And I could not persuade him that it was solely provoked by the hostility of the publisher, not to myself, but to Schelling and Goethe.

The summer wore away. I worked hard at my lectures, and went much into society, yet I hardly knew that I was the subject of much town talk. There was then a general dislike to everything German. I was often spoken of as the German doctor. Once a Dane came to me and asked me why I had not published my geognostical work in my mother tongue. I replied by asking him if he would be responsible for the cost of publication in Danish.

I soon found that the conservatives were hard at work against me. Charges were brought that I was trying to supersede older men, and supplant their systems by my own. "We have Prof. Rüsbrigh,"

they said, "and what more can we ask?" The most foolish allegations were made about me. It was currently reported that I had asserted that I could not think in Danish. As I walked along the streets I could hear people whisper, "There goes the young man who, after he has been two years in Germany, can't think in his mother tongue." I laughed at all this, until at last a note came from Count Schimmelmann cautioning me on being guarded in my expressions, and telling me that he had heard the rumor above mentioned.

I must confess that a certain sense of pride which I felt may have exhibited itself in my bearing, and may have stirred up people to circulate such unjust reports and feel ill-will. I remember that a rich gentleman came to me one day, and asked me to give him instruction in the German philosophy. I knew the man well, and was aware that he was entirely unable to comprehend a single philosophical idea. When he had made the proposal, I said, "Before we come to any arrangement I must inform you of the plan which I have adopted with regard to compensation. The sum which I receive depends entirely upon the aptitude of the learner, and the advantage which he receives from my instructions, with this important consideration, that the money received is in inverse ratio to the good conferred. The more he learns, the less I receive. Whoever entirely follows my thoughts, and grasps the whole subject, will not owe me anything; but the man who has the misfortune not to understand a word, cannot adequately pay me for my trouble." Of course

he took umbrage, and did not renew the proposal; and it may be readily imagined that my trifling added him to the number of my opponents.

My lectures began in October, 1803. They were open to the public, of course. I was in high spirits. What had been in my youth the secret of my own soul, cherished, but never expressed, the subject which fascinated me while it yet repelled me, was now to be brought by me to the minds of men, and to become the theme of my daily instructions. I knew the strength of my adversaries. I was confident of my own powers, but I did not stop to ask whether the contest which was before me was worth the pains of the battle. I felt no downcast fear as to the issue. I knew, indeed, that, supported by a band of young adherents, I must encounter the most resolute opposition, not only from the court, from all the conservative elements of society, but the more I thought of this, the more I was stimulated to go on. I regretted heartily my many little hasty speeches which had given offence to those who would have been my friends, and I could not fail to see the threatening aspect of my whole future. I saw that there was no bond of connection between my scientific systems and those of my friends. They dealt alone with the conditioned, I with the free and unconditioned, and there could be no tie between us. And I could not help feeling that the views which I held were of great worth. My lectures were not to be mere dealings with abstractions, — they concerned life, immortality, and God, — and I could not refrain from prayer in my own room before I went

before the public assembly. It was the first prayer, I suppose, which I had offered since the days of my childhood. I had talked much about Christianity, but this prayer went deeper than my talk, even to the root of religion. I carried the influence of my prayer to the lecture-room. Faith, unconquerable and serene, became the basis of all my wisdom, and did not desert me.

My lodgings were directly across the street from the lecture-room, and as I looked out I could see an excited crowd. Two of my friends came in to go over with me, and I saw that they were nervously anxious. We crossed the street; the doorway of the hall was full; we could scarcely effect an entrance. At last way was made, and I passed into the hall, which was crowded with men. Even the windows were all occupied. As I stepped upon the stage there was perfect silence. In an instant I felt free from embarrassment, and no tremulousness could be detected in my speech. I did not venture to speak without manuscript. Nevertheless, I was carried away by my interest in the subject, and such was my earnestness and the glow of my manner that I do not wonder that I gained applause for eloquence. It is plain that my audience was pleased. Day after day the hall was thronged, and people went an hour before the time to secure good seats. And it was not students alone who attended my lectures. Professors, savans, officials of high position, were there. The interest which the public took in them was unprecedented; they were the talk of the town. But I was too much in earnest.

with my work to be foolishly elated. It seemed to be a serious thing to influence a community as I was doing, and I looked upon it in a most serious light.

My popularity was increased by a little circumstance which occurred soon after the lectures commenced. On the fifth or the sixth day I accidentally left my manuscript at home, and did not discover its absence till I was on the platform. I disliked to send for it, and ventured to proceed without it, stating the circumstance to my audience, and begging their indulgence. I saw that I had only stimulated their curiosity, and that they expected a slow and stumbling performance. But the subject lay so clear in my mind that I found that I could communicate my thoughts better extempore than by reading from manuscript. My audience were equally surprised and delighted. I was so pleased with my success that I determined to give up my manuscript forever. Yet this whole occurrence was wrested by my adversaries to my disadvantage. They had the malice to assert that the thing was premeditated; that I had committed my lecture to memory, and then recited it by heart.

Meanwhile the crowds at my lectures grew larger and larger. It began to be rumored that I should be forbidden to speak in public, and my audience was in daily expectation of seeing some high official rise during my speaking and impose silence upon me. But my adversaries did not take that course. They worked with more subtlety and strove to undermine my reputation. And in this they suc-

ceeded. I looked to Count Reventlow for assistance in procuring a field for my geognostic investigations. He was the avowed enemy of all speculative philosophy, and was unwilling to believe that a man could be a metaphysician and a practical man at the same time. And so, with my opponents urging him on against me, it is plain that the future must have begun to wear a somewhat gloomy aspect.

But the fall and the winter wore away, and I went on with my lectures. The hall continued to be well filled, although of course the excitement witnessed at the outset could not be kept up. The opposition of my enemies grew, meanwhile, and Schimmelmann was the only minister upon whom I could rely. Gradually the year wore round, and the time grew near for me to return to Halle and claim my bride.

At length I went to Giebichenstein. I was received with a great welcome. I spent a part of my time with Reil in Halle, and the rest of the time, how happy it may be imagined, in Reichardt's family. I was married the fourth of September, 1808. We remained at my new home for a week after the wedding. The parents saw their daughter leave them for her northern home with many tears; we took our leave and started for Berlin. We tarried there at the house of my wife's brother. How different did Berlin seem to me now from what it did before. Tieck was not there, but I made the acquaintance of his sister. I met the elder Schlegel there.\* I there became acquainted with Schleiermacher. The few days spent in the city were of great

interest, and they awakened fresh memories of the many happy days which I had spent in Germany.

At length we arrived at Copenhagen, and the first days could not be agreeable to a lady who, like my wife, had hardly known what care was. She could speak Danish hardly at all, and I was obliged to leave her at the hotel all day, while I was busy in arranging all the details of our house. I used often to return and find her in tears. My friends came in to see us, but, as they could not talk German, their visits were only an annoyance to my wife.

Nevertheless, time went by. We got accustomed to our lot, and were soon invited into very agreeable society. The Countess Schimmelmann, and many of the first ladies of Copenhagen, received my wife very kindly, and often invited us to their homes. Many things were made very agreeable to us, and it may seem as if our life in Denmark must have been very pleasant. But it was far from it. The furnishing of my house had plunged me into embarrassing debts. I had thus far in life lived without any perplexity regarding money, and when I found myself in momentary trouble there was always some way out soon found. But now my embarrassments were serious, for I had not alone myself to care for,—the welfare of another one was in my keeping. Even now, in my old age, I am not familiar with all the details of business, and the care of money is something I know nothing about. And so, in Copenhagen, the future towered gloomily before me. I was saddled with debts, and with all the thrift that I could exercise my income did not prove

sufficient to meet my current expenses. I tried to hide my cares from my wife as much as I could, but she could not help seeing the posture of my affairs.

Meanwhile my enemies continued their attacks, and even went so far as to assert that a young man had been made insane in consequence of my teaching. It was plain that sooner or later my lectures would be proscribed, and my strongest friends be compelled to give up my cause. This gave me new anxieties. I could see no means of warding off the attacks of my enemies. I could not live down opposition. I should starve before I had done it. What I said was perverted by malice, and what I did was caricatured. Those were, indeed, trying days.

All at once the day broke. In March, 1804, I received a letter from Dr. Reil, of Halle, which awakened new hopes. He stated that it was the intention of the Prussian government to promote the interests of the university there by calling thither eminent and rising young men from abroad, and he asked whether it would be agreeable to accept the post of Professor ordinarius of Natural Philosophy, Physiology, and Mineralogy. "Upon that hint I spake." I told him in reply what the whole condition of my circumstances was, and that much as I loved my country and wished to serve her, she had thrust me moodily away and would not accept my service. I told him how much I loved Germany, and how glad beyond measure my wife would be to have me accept such a call. In truth, we were both in an ecstasy of delight. I had not known till

then how much my heart was drawn to Germany. And bitter as was the thought of being driven from my own country, the prospect of such a life as awaited me was enough to make it tolerable. My wife had not told me before how much her heart had yearned for home. And now it seemed that she was to live within cannon-shot of her father's door. Reil forwarded money enough to pay the most pressing bills, and we prepared for the journey. I wished to be in Halle by September, in order to have ample time to prepare my lectures. And thus closed that strange episode of life in Copenhagen.

## CHAPTER VI.

RETURN TO HALLE — COMMENCES HOUSEKEEPING — DARK PROSPECTS — SCHLEIERMACHER — LIFE AS PROFESSOR AT HALLE — FICHTE — JOHANNES VON MÜLLER — ALEX. VON HUMBOLDT — POLITICAL ASPECTS — WARLIKE APPEARANCES — EXCITED FEELING IN HALLE — THE SEIZING OF THE CITY BY THE FRENCH — NAPOLEON AT HALLE — THE UNIVERSITY BROKEN UP BY NAPOLEON — SAD DAYS — UNSETTLED LIFE FROM 1806 TO 1808.

NOTWITHSTANDING all my exultant delight over my future, I could not leave my own country, when the hour of parting came, without many sorrows. For her sake I had given up the flattering call to Ireland, and had gone home with the fullest intention of devoting my whole energies to the good of my native land. I was now, as it were, an exile. I should have to give up my sweet mother tongue, and only speak in foreign accents. I was full of sadness, and it was not till the packet had brought us almost to the German shore that my spirits revived. But they did revive, partly by way of reaction, partly in consequence of my wife's joy. And when I came to Hamburg the German language seemed so homelike that that trouble passed by, and I felt quite happy again. At Kiel I met Hensler, so well known to the readers of Niebuhr's Life. At Hamburg I visited Madame Sieveking, the Elizabeth Fry of Germany. The whole North was then

in possession of the French, and it was wonderful in what apathy the people lived under this foreign power. The course of Napoleon was then unchecked. He had almost without opposition gained possession of the northern duchies. But at Berlin we found no fear of his progress. I could see no good reason for such security, but as the people felt no alarm, mine soon passed away.

In September, 1804, a year after my wedding, I restored the much-loved daughter to the arms of her parents. It was a happy day to all. I at once busied myself in making arrangements for house-keeping, but I soon fell into trouble again. My father-in-law had hired a house far too large for our necessities, and the whole outlay had to be proportioned to the splendor of the mansion. I had almost no library, and rich as was that of the university in old books, it was not supplied with those works which were indispensable to me. I had no mineral cabinet, and the one which belonged to the university was worthless. It would be necessary for me to procure one. To add to my perplexities I found that the sum which had been advanced to me at Copenhagen to settle my most urgent debts there would be deducted from my salary, and leave me without resources for my first three months. And to add to all, rivalries and jealousies arose among the professors, and I found that as a foreigner, and a Dane at that, and as an advocate of the new transcendental philosophy, I had the same battle to fight in Halle which I had already fought in Copenhagen. The men who held to empirical

science, and looked no further, began to circulate the vilest rumors about me. It was asserted that my wife and I had become Catholics. A public journal had me in its columns as an atheist. Stories passed around regarding the looseness of my life. It was said that I was in the daily use of large potions of opium and lived in constant intoxication. One professor expressed to my wife his sorrow over my mercurial temperament, and his fear that I should come to an early death from over-excitement. I had a slight inflammation of the throat and had to call in a physician. He asked me if I did not have a trembling of my hands every morning till I had taken a good dose of schnapps. I was so angry that I asked him whether he had any desire to know what these trembling hands could do. It was very plain that trouble was before me, and that discomforts were to be found at Halle as well as everywhere else.

There were five philosophical professors in the university. They were all men of some note, and stood together in compact unity to resist the young advocate of Schelling's philosophy. All but one were avowed followers of Kant. They carried their opposition so far as to warn the young men against me. To add to my perplexities was the knowledge that I had not yet advanced far enough to trace the relations between physics and Schelling's metaphysics. I, indeed, believed that I had in the latter an *ars inveniendi*, which would exercise a real influence in the development of physical science, and in the treatment of all its departments. I did not yet

clearly see that Schelling's system and the experimental system were so wholly outside of each other that they must expand in completely different ways; that they would give rise to two entirely variant sciences; that the endeavor to interfuse experimental philosophy with what was called the nature philosophy would only be destruction to the former. Schelling's transcendental system in contrast with the Kantian or Baconian is thoroughly ideal, and that for this reason, that its reality lies in the All. The influence which it exerts over every empirical science is, therefore, hard to trace to details. This is, moreover, true, also, of history. All empiricism proceeds from the visible, the granted, the connections and the relations of conditioned forms; and where she directs herself to the discovery of universal laws she never transcends the limits of sense, and the worth of her discoveries depends upon the clearness with which she views her field of search. What lies beyond it has no value to the empirical philosopher. And if I could not yet see that Schelling's system of transcendental philosophy, which deals with the unseen and the unconditioned, was wholly outside of the empirical system, how should I be able to make myself understood in my lectures? I saw that I should become the object of the strongest opposition. And yet my confidence was so strong that I did not fear the combined antagonism of all the forces which might be brought against me.

And there was, indeed, a bright side. During the two years which I had spent in Denmark, Schelling's

system had gained many adherents, and awakened much interest among the young men of the university. It was plain to the acutest observers that with the new century was to dawn a new day in science. Another spirit was abroad, and opposition to the men of the future by the men of the past would be vain. There were also two *privat do-centes* in the college who were adherents to the new system. They soon were called away from Halle, but they supported my views at the first. Schelling in Jena was my firm friend, and I could rely on his full support. Wolf, the great, the eminent philologist, was then the chief light of Halle. He warmly espoused my views. Reil, who procured me the call to Halle, was true from first to last. Mickel, the anatomist, and Spengler, the well-known historian of medicine, were constant friends; and great numbers of the young men were only stimulated by the opposition made to me to become my most enthusiastic pupils.

I ought here to speak of a man, the making of whose acquaintance formed an epoch in my life. I allude to Schleiermacher, who was called to Halle as professor extraordinary at the same time with myself, or a few weeks later. Schleiermacher, as is well known, was small in stature, and somewhat deformed, yet not so much as to be very apparent. He was quick in all his movements, and his countenance was very expressive. A certain sharpness in his eye might to some be a little repulsive. He seemed to look you through. He was some years older than I. His face was long, his features sharply

drawn, the lips firmly pressed together, the chin protruding, the eye keen and fiery, the countenance composed, serious, and thoughtful. I saw him in the most varied circumstances,—in deep meditation, playful, jocose, mild, and indignant, moved with joy and with pain; but in all there was a constant underlying calmness, greater and more able to control his spirit than the passing gush of feeling. And yet there was nothing impassive in this calmness. A touch of irony played over his features, real sympathy with man never deserted him, and a child's goodness and sweetness were always his. His constant thoughtfulness had wonderfully mastered his natural temper and tone. While he was in the most mirthful conversation, nothing escaped him. He saw everything that transpired around him, he heard everything, even the low talk of others. Art has wonderfully perpetuated his face. Rauch's bust of him is one of the master-triumphs of skill, and whoever has lived as intimately with him as I, is almost startled when he looks upon it. It often seems to me as if he were there, in my presence, as if he were just on the point of opening those lips and uttering some weighty word.

We opened ourselves unreservedly to one another, and I have never experienced more decisively that an unrestrained intimacy with others favors, rather than hinders, a correct knowledge of ourselves. As Goethe, Schelling, and Tieck had won upon me before, so now did Schleiermacher. What people called Spinozaism was just what drew me most strongly to him, because he did not appear to me to

be cast in a rigid mould, but to be the very spring of the most unconstrained freedom. His *Critique of Morals* had been published about a year. It is true, his style was dialectically negative, but yet there was plainly in the man the reality of positive and comprehensive truth which should lose all negation in a loftier statement. It is generally known, through the agency of my friend Twesten, how deeply he entered into my views of natural science, at least so far as these were capable of being generalized into the broadest expression. We lived united by the closest ties; we communicated to each other our views, our thoughts, even our fancies. Schleiermacher, as well as myself, lived in Richardt's family; our walks, our parties of pleasure, our associates were common; our best hearers, those who were in earnest, attended the lectures of us both. His ethical lectures and mine on philosophy appeared to our hearers to be most intimately united; they seemed to be complementary to each other. We also made a mutual exchange of what we knew. Schleiermacher listened to my lectures on physics, and opened Greek philosophy to me, and taught me to appreciate Plato. It is, of course, not my object here, where I am merely exhibiting my personal relations to him, to decide the place which he is to occupy as the one who has opened a new future to theological inquiries; the knowledge is wanting to me to do that, even if this were a suitable place for it. But I can hardly realize vividly enough, nor paint forcibly enough, what I owe to my intimate acquaintance with him and to his wri-

tings,— how deeply they have both affected my character.

The more deeply, earnestly, religiously Schleiermacher looked upon life and science, the more decided he became in rejecting, not only in his scientific lectures, but also in life, everything that seemed to him foolish and worthless. He even loved to trifle at times with conventional forms. Many stories about him were current in the city, and perhaps went further. People used to talk about the professor of theology going out to botanize, in a short, green jacket, light trowsers, and a tin box thrown over his shoulder.

Schleiermacher had not only the post of a professor, but he was preacher to the university also. An old church was fitted up for the use of the students, and when the widowed queen died, it was Schleiermacher's duty to preach the funeral sermon. It was in March. A delightful spring day enticed us both, accompanied by a common friend, to walk out to Petersberg on the evening before the solemn burial service should be held. We spent the night in a hut in the little village of Ostrow. That night will never be forgotten by me. We never drew so near each other as then. Schleiermacher never displayed himself to me more exalted or more pure. That night still comes back to me as one of the marked periods of my life,— I might almost say it seems hallowed. The day closed glorious and beautiful; the landscape stretched away, made fair by the new activities of spring. The whole scene was like a vast natural temple; the magnificence gave wings

to every thought, it penetrated us through and through, and, as the spring quickens the earth, so did this prospect quicken our spirits. I have a witness of the deep impression which this night made upon Schleiermacher, in a letter to his friend, Lady Herz. It was the reflection of his own purity, in which I stood, as it were, illumined. His deep spirituality was more apparent to me than ever before. The Saviour was with us then, as he had promised to be when two or three were gathered together in his name. It was plain to me that a positive religious character has been his from his childhood among the Moravians up, and that what he called in a technical way sensibility, was, when lifted up into the Christian consciousness, touched with the eternal love of God ; and it grieved me sorely that the faith of so eminent a philosopher was so misunderstood. This sensibility of his was what faith is to love, what thought is to feeling, the second the cherishing guardian of the first.

It was past midnight, and between nine and ten o'clock the next day Schleiermacher must be in the pulpit. The subject must be treated with a great deal of delicacy. After a few hours' sleep we awoke, and yet some eight miles to walk. During the night it had frozen. The warm days which had gone before had melted the snow, and so the road, when frozen again, was uneven. Schleiermacher, an excellent pedestrian, kept ahead of us, and sped along over the roughness. We could scarcely keep up. We noticed how deeply sunk in thought he was, despite the bad walking, and we did not disturb

him. When I came home, I had hardly time to put myself in readiness before the time for church arrived. When I appeared among my brothers there was a general movement. "Ah," said they, "now you have come, we may hope at last to see Schleiermacher." His excursion of the day before had transpired and made the round of the city, and it was even known that we had passed the night in a hut. Early in the morning they had sent to his lodgings, and as he had not returned an hour before the time to commence the funeral service, and the church bells had all begun to ring, they began to think, and some, perhaps, to hope, that he would not come. I kept my peace and let the professors talk.

Schleiermacher ascended to the pulpit. Every one who has heard him remembers the imposing earnestness of his manner while officiating in the sacred desk. His sermon displayed that careful arrangement which always was a distinguishing mark with him. His very calmness and unimpassioned air made a deep impression, and every one left the church with a new conviction of the nothingness of all earthly relations, even the highest, when brought into conflict with the purposes of God. All my brother professors applauded and wondered at the discourse. The fact that he who had pronounced such an elaborate, clear, finished, and judicious funeral oration, had passed the hours previous in a rustic merry-making, appeared to them unparalleled. I do not think that the rumor of his night in the hut at Ostrow made any abiding impression.

How readily I live those days over again, and see myself in the scenes of my former activity. The students who attended Schleiermacher's lectures and my own, or rather those of them who became strongly attached to us, used to meet us once a week at tea, alternating between him and me. The conversation on such occasions was thorough and deep, though unrestrained. A circle was formed, of which I still think with deep interest. It would not be wrong for me to say that this circle embraced all those men whose minds had been roused to a high activity by Wolf, Reil, Schleiermacher, and, I might add, myself. We did not form what could be called a school in any narrow sense, but an insight into the lofty nature of speculative ideas gave interest to all that we did or attempted. Every one, theologian, physician, philologist, strove to grasp life and science in its higher meaning. The professors were not one-sided men, but they were filled with the same earnestness which prevailed among the students. Our opponents appeared to fear that an overstrained excitement, and an absence of all careful and rigid investigation, characterized us, and repressed thorough inquiry with us. This fear showed itself wholly ungrounded. In Halle, all the extravagances of a merely arbitrary system of physical science disappeared. Real investigation, and that we had, won the palm, and I cannot recall a single student of those days who can be reckoned among the mere visionaries of physics. There was formed not only a strong corps of professed scholars in all departments but also trained practical men, who should

be qualified for high public posts. Among these men were found Varnhagen von Ense, the diplomatist and author, Neander, the theologian, Bekker and Böckh, the philologists.

The subjects on which I lectured were natural philosophy, physiology, mineralogy, geognosy, and in the last half year, being specially requested by my pupils, physics as an empirical science. These last lectures demanded a considerable outlay, although, through the kindness of a friend, I was provided with an air-pump and an electrical machine. My whole situation was more favorable than ever before, although soon after my arrival I saw that I should have to economize. I left the roomy house which my father-in-law had hired for me, and took a smaller one. I dismissed my servant, and lived in great seclusion, because all company could be met at my father-in-law's, at Giebichenstein. I lived wholly for my studies, my lectures, and the students who attached themselves to me.

Yet my relations to the students were not favorable throughout. The mass of them were uncultivated and rough, and my antipathy to the wild student life was so strong that I could hardly conceal it. Once in a while I was saluted with a *vivat*, but the *pereat* generally was my portion.

Yet, however severely we may judge the German universities and the students of those days, it is not to be denied that a good element was there, a sensibility to true science, always ready to break out of the roughest natures. Wolf's, Reil's, Schleiermacher's and my own students, formed a circle that

knew how to appreciate worth, and had it been allowed to Halle University to enjoy many more years of peace, there would have come from its halls many a man ready to play an important part in the history of his times.

I was living in perfect contentment; the fairest prospects were before me; my activities were entirely absorbed, and their circle was daily widening; my situation, my family, my friends, my auditors, all were as I could wish; and for the first time in my life I could feel free from a weighty pressure of care about my outward circumstances. But the soil out of which such promising fruit sprung was shallow, and I did not know it. True, I thought much of the condition of Prussia. But I could not see it with the eyes of one born in the kingdom. Yet the future loomed up before dark and threatening, and I contemplated it only with foreboding.

In January, 1806, Clara was born, the only child which God gave to me. She was sickly, but yet she lived and thrived. In the spring of the same year I went to Berlin with Schleiermacher and his sister. The season was charming, and Berlin charged with animation. Political affairs were then very threatening, and the nearer a decision came, the more clearly could it be read that men demanded vigorous measures.

Humboldt, having returned from America a year before, was now in Berlin. Two houses of equal size stood in Frederick Street, surrounded with trees. In one of them lived Humboldt, in the other Johannes Müller, the historian. In the great house,

now known as the Frederick William Institute, I sought Fichte; went up one flight of stairs, met a well-dressed gentleman, and asked if Fichte did not live there. "The man is a stranger to me," he replied; and I confess I looked at him with astonishment. That Fichte lived in that house was certain, and at length I found him, when I had tried at another staircase. But that any one who lived under the same roof with the philosopher should not know even the name of Fichte, then in the very bloom of his reputation, one of the most distinguished men in Germany, seemed to me, I confess, rather strange; it made me feel that I was in a great city.

The eminent scholars of Berlin were the first objects of my inquiries. I regarded it as a specially favorable circumstance that I could make the acquaintance of Johannes Müller, the historian. I was familiar with his history of Switzerland, and had read it with deep interest. The thoroughness of his investigations had called forth my admiration, while the spirit which prevailed in his whole method excited my wonder. Musical composers sometimes complain of Goethe's songs that their very excellences preclude the possibility of adapting them to the most fitting music. The very poetry, they say, contains too much harmony, and fetters the freedom of the composer. So the powerful dramatic style of Müller seemed to preclude a more artistic expression, even when he was merely stating the rude facts of history. In private he was

an instructive companion, and my acquaintance with him was highly favorable to my own studies.

But the meeting with Alexander von Humboldt was the chief advantage of my stay in Berlin. I had long admired the extraordinary talents of that man. His botanical investigations; his geognostical studies, calling attention to the uniformity in the strata of the older mountain chains (a view which, although partial when first propounded, must be, nevertheless, regarded as giving a different aspect to the modern science of geognosy); his extended writings upon the irritated nerves of animals, leading directly to Volta's discovery of galvanism; his eudiometrical inquiries, which, though leading to incorrect results at first, have yet added much to our knowledge;—all these labors, and that unwearied mind, which easily solved the most difficult problems of his time, which recognized their historical value, revealed to me in him the greatest genius of the age. Some random expressions of younger naturalists had prejudiced me against him. Whether they, men not at all eminent, were known to him, I cannot say—to this hour I am ignorant; but as it is so much a part of my nature to admire in others talents which I do not possess, the prejudice that I entertained against Humboldt troubled me much. Still, that soon passed away. I saw him almost every day. His conversation was in the highest degree instructive; the inexhaustible extent of his observations, which, running out into every department of science, comprehended all the features of a prominent though comparatively unknown and inacces-

sible continent, and which seemed to impose the necessity of studying the whole earth in the same close and critical method, produced an overpowering impression upon me. I saw before me the creator of physical geography, the man who, in combining and arranging the vast array of facts which his industry had accumulated, was widening the science which he himself had called into being. There never has been a scholar who has had such good reason to shrink back in view of the immense masses of material which he had to harmonize and group as Humboldt. Everything which he learned was his forever, and could be summoned from his memory in an instant; old memoranda and the most varied facts all were at his immediate command.

I made my home at the house of my friend and publisher, Reimer, very far from Humboldt's lodgings. I recall one occasion when Humboldt and I left an evening party held at some distance from both of our homes. He came with me to Reimer's house in Cook Street (Kochstrasse); then I went with him to his lodgings; he back again to mine; and thus a good part of the night was consumed, when he implored me not to go back with him, as I had intended to do. If I had had the good fortune to make this acquaintance in more settled times it would have ripened into a close friendship; as it was, it made an epoch in my life.

The hospitality of the Berliners is noted. A man in any way distinguished, who comes among them, need not want the opportunity to enter their best society. Almost daily I dined in the company of

Humboldt, Johannes Müller, Fichte, and Bartholdy; often, too, I spent the evening in their society. I recall with the most pleasing recollections Madame Herz, the distinguished friend of Schleiermacher, remarkable for her spirit, culture, imposing and almost regal beauty, and her amiability.

That Schleiermacher was seldom missing in these social gatherings, when his duties and his very extended relations with society would allow, may be readily inferred.

Thus I had no lack of what might minister to my mental activity; but this was stimulated in yet new and more decisive ways. The political relations of those remarkable times have been so fully illustrated by others, that what appeared to a foreign scholar, who lived only for his studies and troubled himself little about politics, could only be that which all the world knew, and therefore now of little worth. But those were really times of immense importance, times big with great events in store, the dawn of kindling hopes, which, though for a little period to be obscured, should by and by gleam out again, and smile gratefully down on a disciplined and purified nation.

In the circles amid which I moved the national enthusiasm was deeply felt, and spoke itself out from the purest sources. I, a stranger, and only partially acquainted with the affairs of the country, looked at the future with many fears, which, however, were not shared by my friends. Whether Prussia would succeed in struggling through the next few years was not clear to me, and the present was so full of

enjoyment that no very deep and settled anxieties could take possession of me. My hatred to France, its government, and its ambitious project of crushing out all German nationality, was great and freely outspoken. I did not try to conceal it, and disclosed it not alone in my ordinary conversation, but also in my public lectures. My effort was to communicate my own feeling and to thus aid in arousing a spirit of resistance to the French invader. Still the apathy was wonderful, both among the students at Halle, and among my literary friends at Berlin. They would not believe that there was danger till it was close upon them.

But the summer sped away in Halle, and after a time it appeared that the very region which was our home would be the theatre of war. We had supposed that if Napoleon should attack Prussia he would begin at the Rhine, and the people generally supposed that even if there were open hostilities they would not disturb the ordinary business of life—everything would go on as usual. Least of all could we think that a university would be interfered with and its studies suspended. The number of my hearers had enlarged. I was lecturing this summer for the first time on experimental physics. Schleiermacher's pupils and my own were closely bound together, and it really seemed as if the enthusiasm about our instructions, so far from being repressed by the warlike prospects, was only increased in consequence of the more intense mental activity of every one. As the fall drew near, a division of the Prussian army was quartered at Halle. They

were altogether too blustering and self-confident for my taste ; and the talk of the officers was really disgusting. Instead of respecting, not to say fearing, that wonderful military genius, before whom all obstacles had been as mist before the sun, they talked loudly about the Seven Years' War, and evidently thought that the name of the dead and immortal Frederick was to vanquish the living Napoleon.

Meanwhile rumors came in of the approach of the great enemy, and a stillness, depressing our spirits and increasing our anxiety, rested upon all the inhabitants of Halle. It was now plain that we should see fearful sights in a few days. It was a sad feeling, that of utter impotence, which filled the minds of those who could not bear arms. Could we but take part in our own deliverance, it would at any rate ease our minds. But this we could not do ; we were as children, and our protection was intrusted to these boastful, over-confident soldiers, who were quartered in our houses.

Nearer and nearer approached the foe, and more intense grew the feeling of the whole town. The tidings of the reverses at Jena and at Anerstadt came in and increased our fears. At length we could hear the distant cannonade, and see the clouds of flying dust. The day of our trouble was just at hand.

The little house to which I had removed from the larger one which I had occupied before, was a corner tenement, on the Parade, opposite the university library. I could look over the old ruin of Moritzburg and the village of Passendorf, to the

hills on the south-west, which bounded the horizon. All summer long I lived in daily expectation of an attack on the part of the troops who were pressing over those hills and encamping on the plains at their base. On the morning of the sixteenth of October, I believed that I heard firing in the distance. I hurried to the window, looked over to the level ground beyond the Long Bridge which crosses the Saale, and saw near Passendorf a confusion which convinced me that skirmishing was going on there. The intense excitement in which we had passed the last few days had, however, induced a kind of quietness, or nervous exhaustion, which was very favorable. My wife had just weaned our child, and had gained so much in strength and vigor, that, although the enemy were pressing on, she seemed moved more by curiosity than fear.

Very early came Schleiermacher, accompanied by his sister, the most intimate confidant of my wife. They sought our house because of the fine view which it commanded. But we very soon saw that we should improve our position for observation were we to go to the garden by the Freemasons' Hall. So, mounting to a part of the wall where the descent to the Saale was very steep, we could overlook the whole scene. Several servants and professors were standing there, and the Prussian troops were rapidly passing the Long Bridge. We could see the onset, the firing on both sides, the plunging charges of the cavalry, but all seemed indecisive to an unskilled observer, who could only follow the separate movements. So strangely blinded

by Prussian prestige, and so confident in Prussian valor, were the most, that victory on the French side seemed impossible. "The poor French," said a brother professor at my side, "I almost pity them; they are worn out, it is plain; poor fellows, a sad fate awaits them falling into the hands of our victorious soldiers."

But this hallucination did not last long. The enemy pressed on in yet greater numbers, while our troops were flying before them. Soon all were in motion among us, and, full of fear, every one hurried to his home. My house, situated in a remote and not much frequented part of the city, was regarded by us all as unsafe, and we resolved to spend the time of greatest danger in Schleiermacher's house, in the middle of the city. We hastened our steps to rescue our child from our own home. We made the briefest possible stay in our house, but it was only too long. Mr. Gass, the friend referred to above, took Schleiermacher's sister in charge, Schleiermacher my wife, and I my child. We had to traverse the whole length of Great Ulrich's Street. We could hear the shots in the city, but in the streets there was perfect stillness. No one was to be seen, the houses were all locked; in only one place did I observe any one, and that was a man tearing down a sign which would be likely to draw the enemy to his store. When we came to the well-known turn in Great Ulrich's Street, just before it opens into the Market Place, we saw at a glance the danger which confronted us. The flight of the Prussian army was directly across the city; the

whole Market Place was filled with cannon and with ammunition wagons, and in the streets which led from the Market Place down to the river we could hear the incessant firing. Our course was directly across this retreating mass. How we came through I cannot tell. We were so intent upon self-preservation that we observed nothing else. Enough that we stemmed the current safely. We were near the Merkur Street, where Schleiermacher lived. But just as I turned a corner which would hide the Market Place from further view, I glanced a moment at the scene of rout which we had just traversed, and to my amazement it was utterly empty. Troops and wagons had disappeared as by magic. By the time we had fairly entered one of the side streets the French came up. The shots whistled through the air close by us, and Bernadotte's advance guard rode by at full speed along one of the great streets in full view. They paid no attention to us; the retreating Prussian army was their sole object of pursuit. We reached the house; in the street all was empty and still; the door opened and received us, was closed and locked again, and for a little while we were safe.

Yet not long. The street lay too near to the course of the pursuing army, and parties of cavalry and infantry distributed themselves for purposes of plunder. This movement took us all by surprise. The street is small, and we saw that a party had effected an entrance into the house opposite. An instant after three or four thundered at our door. They called out to us that they would be satisfied

with a glass or two of wine if we would pass it out. In our folly we resolved to give it to them, and, as I opened the window to reach it to an officer, he held his pistol to my head and threatened to blow my brains out if the door was not opened. So we had to yield, and in a moment they rushed in. I had to give up my watch, but happily I had no money with me. They took Schleiermacher's linen and his ready money, and were in a little while off for plunder elsewhere. Then we had peace, and could think a little.

It was plain that city and university were in the hands of the enemy. The whole course of our life would now be changed. All that we had resolved in the past would be of no account in the future. Still, the great peril in which we yet were prevented us from thinking of anything but the duty and care of the present. The pursuit was over, people began to appear one by one in the streets, the enemy were no longer to be seen, and I ventured in the afternoon to go to my house to discover what had been done there. I went along the streets near the river. A few persons were venturing out, but not beyond their immediate neighborhood. Here and there were small groups talking in an undertone. Reports of dreadful doings in the suburbs got round, and in the streets lay the bodies of slain Prussians, yet in full uniform. No one had entered my dwelling. I could now save my money and conceal my valuables. That night I did not spend with Schleiermacher, but with another friend. We were in the full power of the enemy.

The first part of our night was a sad one. We fancied a reign of horror, and saw in our vision the destruction of everything hallowed by sacred associations. The people in the nearest neighborhood seemed separated from us by an unfathomable abyss, and rumors of unspeakable cruelties floated in upon us from hour to hour. We were in momentary expectation that the torch would be applied to the city, and that the rule of license and rapine would begin. But with the advancing hours our fears left us; we became merry at length, and at last we slept.

The night passed away, and we learned how groundless our fears had been. Bernadotte's troops took possession of the city, and it is but simple justice to record that they were kept in perfect discipline. A proclamation was soon published that the studies of the university would not be interfered with, and that no troops would be quartered with the professors. The treasury of the institution would not be touched, all excesses on the part of his troops would be repressed, and all the rights of the citizens would be respected. I hastened to nail this proclamation to my door.

But in a few days we found new cause for alarm. Troops were constantly passing through the city. We heard that Napoleon would soon be present in person. It was said that he was fired with rage at our university. In truth, we had much to fear. The students were intensely excited, and we heard that they were insisting upon the right of the whole sidewalk, driving even the officers into the street,

and they were purposing to constitute themselves a body-guard for the protection of their teachers. I went with Schleiermacher to the Prorector Maas, to ask him to summon a council to decide upon suitable measures of action. But I heard with amazement that he regarded the step as dangerous; the enemy, he thought, would consider us engaged in a conspiracy. Personally, this man was not at all imposing; he was slim and small, had no servants, and it was said was compelled to clean the boots of the soldiers who were quartered with him. Few of the professors ventured beyond their dwellings, few spoke together except in brief words, while the students paraded the streets, often shouting as they went.

Napoleon came. He took possession of the house of Professor Mickel, one of the most attractive in the city, and standing on Great Berlin Square. His guard, when drawn up in parade, made an imposing appearance. Napoleon inspected them personally, and made a speech to them in praise of their conduct during the taking of the city. That he was full of bitterness against the Prussians, we knew well. Halle was the first Prussian city which he had taken, and while his troops were following the enemy, he determined to rest in Halle. I was still with my family in Schleiermacher's house. A member of Napoleon's bureau of war was quartered there, who naturally took the best chambers, so that Schleiermacher, with his sister and his friend Gass, as well as myself with my wife and child, were miserably lodged. We did not undress ourselves for

days. The officer quartered upon us was polite, excessively so. He often sought to draw us into conversation, but as we were always reserved he at last had the audacity to ask Schleiermacher to indite a paper addressed to the Prussian court, which should display the great advantages which would follow the victorious march of Napoleon. That Schleiermacher should listen to such a request without breaking out into ungovernable rage surprised me, indeed. It may well be thought that those were times of humiliation. The official remained, however, polite as ever. Once he talked unreservedly of the unbridled ambition of the emperor. It was, he maintained, his object to restore the old Roman empire of the middle ages, and should he succeed in this he would be able in a short time to advance the welfare of the nations which he should conquer, for a lasting peace must ensue. The culture of France would be a universal bond of union, and there would be no power which would dare disturb the reign of peace that would follow. An unmeasured bitterness, an almost irrepressible hate, sprung up in our hearts as we heard these words in our own language from a man of German birth. We left the house but little, we shunned, so far as we could, the sight of our detested foes. Napoleon remained, if I mistake not, three days in Halle. On the second day he rode with his generals and marshals through the street where I was staying. The official who was quartered upon us urged us to witness the splendid array. After repeated requests Schleiermacher and I cast a hasty glance down

upon the street. This did not enable us to discriminate the separate personages. I saw distinctly only the fanciful uniform of Murat. Napoleon I never saw.

But the more all external help faded away from sight, the more threatening the appearance which circumstances assumed, the greater became my confidence, despite all probabilities, that what was truly good in Germany could not be suffered to perish, and the surer mounted my conviction that He who had guided the course of history would not permit all the precious results of ages to be trodden out of sight in an instant. I ventured to speak out what I felt, and this conviction remained with me as my consolation so long as the French possessed the country. The conviction that I should live to witness Napoleon's downfall never left me.

On one of the days during which Napoleon remained at Halle, a student rushed into Schleiermacher's house in the greatest excitement and alarm. My wife, who was sustained by remarkable courage and heroism, rallied him for his fears. It was some time before he could control himself enough to speak. My wife still laughed at him for a bold German youth. At last he became composed enough to inform us of the cause of his alarm.

A deputation of three professors, of whom the distinguished educator Niemeyer was one, had been selected to wait upon Napoleon. While they were with the emperor a number of the students gathered upon the square, and when the professors came from the imperial presence, one of them made a

brief address to the students, which they loudly applauded. But to the French the purport of the speech and occasion of applause were equally unknown. Added to this, when Napoleon was taking his daily ride through the streets, a number of students thronged around him without giving any salutation. This uncourteous way of German *burschen* must have been provoking to him, and was, doubtless, considered intentional. One student, whom Napoleon addressed, replied with a simple Monsieur.

On this, people began to fear that the emperor's hostility to the university would be made fully manifest. The report passed around that a number of the students were in arms against him; but in truth there was no foundation for such a rumor. Two young noblemen, who, doubtless, hesitated between military service and the continuance of their studies, did, indeed, join the army. Napoleon might reasonably think that so large a number of young men from the best families might be able to stir up much rebellious feeling after he had passed on. Unacquainted with the methods of conducting German universities, he supposed that the students lived in commons, and wondered that they were so freely allowed to roam at large. Thus understanding affairs, he dismissed the university, and ordered the students to depart at once to their homes. That this threw the students into trouble was natural; but what they especially feared, and what had so alarmed the one who fled to our house, was the thought that Napoleon's plan was to follow them out upon the roads and dispatch them unarmed.

The whole of the great house occupied in part by Schleiermacher was crowded with soldiers. Towards morning, during an unquiet sleep, we perceived an unusual stir, a tramping on the stairs, loud words of command in the court, and the tread of horses. When we were fairly awake the city was empty. We, the teachers, remained in the deserted town, our profession made worthless, our "occupation gone." A few of the older students ventured to remain.

In the city all was apparently peaceful. The council of professors met, and we learned that the funds of the university had not been spared. A document had arrived from Dessau stating that we were in disgrace with the emperor. Scholars, it stated, ought not to trouble themselves with politics; their business was to cultivate and diffuse the sciences; the professors at Halle had mistaken their calling, and the emperor had resolved to break up the university. That every one was dismayed, may be guessed. The council of professors was thrown into trepidation and unable to act. I was myself filled with the thought that so eminent a body of men ought in all this time of trouble to preserve unsullied dignity of deportment. There were, of course, some unworthy words put forth. It was urged by a few that we try to justify ourselves with Napoleon, and convince him that we never cherished hostile feelings towards him. Such an expression would have been with me a deliberate lie. For our feelings towards Napoleon, before the capture of the city, I said, we have no account to give. All

that we could plead was, that since we came under his power we had done what we could to promote a patient subjection on the part of the students, and merit no reproaches from our conquerors.

The position of Schleiermacher and myself was bad enough. Our salary was due the first of November, and that which had been received was already fully spent. We had, indeed, received from the students themselves a large sum in advance for the lectures which were just to commence. I had in my possession about four hundred dollars. I had not, of course, expected to be in any want of money, and was relying on the usual receipt of my salary. But with the departure of the students I was compelled to return the money which they had paid me in advance for my lectures, and it was fortunate for me that I had made no encroachment upon it. After adjusting all my accounts I found that I had seven dollars left. Schleiermacher had no more than I. It was impossible to receive any from distant friends. An army was between them and us, and all communication was cut off.

We resolved to unite the little capital which was at our command, and to keep house in common. Schleiermacher removed into my little tenement. My wife and child and Schleiermacher's sister occupied one small chamber, he and I another, and we all worked and studied in one room. In a corner of that room Schleiermacher wrote his Commentary on the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy. We lived most sparingly, saw very few visitors, almost never

left the house, and when our money was gone I sold my silver.

Yet, though troubled in these ways, we had some sources of comfort left us. We had great and unshaken faith in the future, and believed that we should live to see the restoration of our land. We used soon to gather in at our tea some friends and the few students who had had the courage to remain in Halle. Fortunately we had laid in a large store of sugar and tea before the enemy came. The evenings we then spent together I shall never forget.

News of all kinds poured in upon us. Napoleon was marching on in conquest, and we were soon horrified to learn that even Magdeburg offered but little resistance. In our own place we were often amused to hear of the extreme fear into which even the professors would sometimes fall. Yet I confess it was natural, and we, too, shared in it. Some of the captured powder-wagons stood on the square directly in front of my house, and a considerable amount was scattered upon the ground. The foolhardiness of the French soldiers was amazing. Their iron-heeled shoes would often strike fire upon the pavement, and they carelessly smoked as they walked among the powder-wagons. Remonstrance with them would have done no good, and we lived in continual terror.

Schleiermacher and I considered ourselves fortunate to secure passes which would allow us to travel. They were procured with some difficulty. We had to be measured like recruits, and wore marks as suspected; but it was a happy freedom

which would permit us even this license when we might be disposed to use it.

But let it not be thought that our studies did not go on. Our investigations were mostly of a speculative kind. There were times when the condition of the country and our own straits wholly faded from our minds. Of course my relations with Schleiermacher became most intimate. At last communication was opened with Berlin and Copenhagen. Money came in from friends and publishers, and our immediate necessities were supplied. Then came the task of deciding upon the future. Schleiermacher resolved to remain in Halle yet a little longer, because the perfect seclusion and the slight cost of living favored him in his scientific investigations. I felt that I must look elsewhere. My Danish friends recommended me to those in power there, and I was assured of a competent support if I should return thither. Then came the real difficulty of deciding. I never had felt so strongly bound to Prussia and to my brother professors as now. Trouble had drawn us together, and the adversities of the land had warmed my heart towards her. Had I had means I should probably have remained. But I was without resources, and so was compelled to accept the offer of Danish friends, and to bid adieu to Halle and Schleiermacher.

My life for the next two years was one of great distress, of great anxieties, and of great privations. I had no income, and was obliged to live upon the hospitalities of friends in Kiel, Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Lübeck. I had, indeed, an offer, through

the kindness of Count Schimmelmann, to take an office in the finance department of Denmark, but I could not consent to give up my profession, my studies, and my hopes of usefulness in science. So, against the strongest protestations of my friends, I refused the invitation. The whole future of Prussia seemed uncertain, but I could not help thinking that I should be able before many years to resume the current of my labors in that country, and still rank myself as a citizen by adoption. Meanwhile my circumstances were almost desperate. Had I been alone I could have borne it better; but, with a wife and child dependent upon me, the uncertainties of the future and the needs of the present made my situation deplorable. The kindness of friends did not, indeed, allow us to suffer; but the sense of dependence was galling in the extreme. At last, however, the joyful tidings came that the university at Halle would be reopened. I was then at Lübeck. It was like passing from life to death. It is true I was no longer to be a Prussian. Halle lay in the new kingdom of Westphalia, and I should be a subject of the upstart King Jerome. Still, I should be at work, and that was my consolation. And if I had wished to still be a Dane, and live in my native land, there was no longer security there, for Denmark had at last been drawn into the entanglements of European politics, and was then just on the verge of war. So we prepared to go back to the old home at Halle.

## CHAPTER VII.

RETURNS TO HALLE — DISCOURAGING REOPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY — PATRIOTISM OF THE PROFESSORS — KING JEROME BONAPARTE'S VISIT TO HALLE — INTERVIEW WITH JOHANNES VON MÜLLER — SHATTERED CONDITION OF GERMANY — GALL, THE FOUNDER OF PHRENOLOGY — GOETHE AND GALL — GALL'S PHRENOLOGICAL LECTURE AT HALLE — SCHELLING — ACHIM VON ARNIM — WILLIAM GRIMM, THE PHILOLOGIST — FOUNDING OF THE UNIVERSITY AT BERLIN — STEFFENS'S VIEWS OF NATURAL SCIENCE — LAST TRIALS AT HALLE.

THE feeling of pain with which I always returned to the scene of my labors after every long absence, to seat myself again among my books and papers, came over me with greater intenseness than ever as I journeyed back to Halle. It was like going to inspect the ruins of a great conflagration, and try to find some mementos of the lost mansion. And what I anticipated I found. The whole appearance of the part of the city where I lived was changed. Schleiermacher had remained some time in my house before leaving Halle, and finding everything in the order in which he left it made us feel his absence deeply. Wolf had left Halle and gone to Berlin, where all things portended the founding of a new university. Prussia, it was seen, would take her true place sooner through her intellect than through her arms. It was plain that the combined efforts of

William von Humboldt, Niebuhr, Schleiermacher, and Count Dohna, would make Berlin one of the central lights of science and learning.

The opening of the university after so long an interruption was indeed discouraging. There was no general rejoicing over the recommencing of our duties, and when the lectures began there was a great difference discernible between the old flourishing times and this new and troubled epoch. The number of students who had assembled was extremely small, scarcely three hundred in all,—not a quarter part of the old number. All trace of the past life and activity in study had vanished, and I felt every day more and more clearly that my life was running to waste. The number of those who attended my lectures was at the outset only six or seven; they could all be assembled in my little study at home; and, moreover, it was impossible for me now to deal with the speculative philosophy. I had no listeners at all enrolled for my proposed course on experimental physics and mineralogy, and so had the most perfect leisure for carrying on my own studies. I afterwards learned what the opinion of my hearers was with regard to my style of lecturing in those sad days. I had, they said, an extraordinary gift of persuading, so that while I was lecturing I brought home my special views with great power; but the whole impression which I produced was like a cloud of smoke; and if one should compare what he heard from me with the cold, clear, shortly-defined teachings of the other professors, mine lost all their force.

At the commencement of the second half year after the reopening, it was resolved to commemorate the event with solemn ceremonies. It is well known that at that time Halle had no university building, properly so called. A great, old edifice, belonging to the city, with lofty, desolate halls, connected by dark passageways, had been rented to the university for the lectures to be given in. The solemnities, which were to take place in this old structure, differed not at all from the customary tedious affairs, the staple of which consists of long Latin orations. But the rector perpetuus of the university, Niemeyer, determined to give the affair an unusual touch of antiquity. The parti-colored caps and gowns of deceased professors had been kept with great care, and we were directed to appear in the old costume. We looked, when arrayed, like embodied ghosts ; the whole affair made a fearful impression on my mind. It seemed as if we were wearing the shrouds of the dead.

It may, perhaps, be supposed that the patriotism of the professors was extinct ; such, however, was by no means the case. There was, perhaps, no city in the new kingdom of Westphalia which was so attached to the old Prussian government as Halle. And it may readily be supposed that the defection of the great historian, Johannes von Müller, justly regarded as one of the mightiest minds of Germany, could not be looked upon with very favorable eyes by us. Müller was now the director-in-chief of all the universities of Westphalia. Overcome by the sad aspect of affairs, he had sought an interview

with the Emperor Napoleon, and, after taking a professorship of Tubingen, he was called by the new-government to assume the direction of all the scientific institutions of the kingdom of Westphalia. That his place, with all the honor which it conferred, must have been beset with extreme annoyances to him, in connection with his manner of attaining it, may readily be supposed, and we learned, indeed, that Müller was by no means forward in doing all that was expected of him by the government.

The new King Jerome resolved to honor the university of Halle with a visit. He was accompanied by a large number of generals and courtiers, and among them was Johannes von Müller. I at first resolved not to appear with the other professors at the public presentation to the king, but I could not resist the desire to see the man who had been lifted by his brother out of a very ordinary rank in life, compelled to put away his wife and marry a princess, and then, without any show of personal merit or power, become a king. The whole corps of professors and of city officials were assembled at Niemeyer's. The gateway through which Jerome must pass as he entered the city was strewn with flowers, and beautiful girls stood there to welcome him with songs. I confess all this excited my indignation. For the reception of a true and beloved king this would have been all right; but for an upstart — but what could we do?

While we stood crowded together, awaiting the arrival of the royal guest, our talk was curiously varied. Many of the professors expressed them-

selves dryly enough. I held my peace, ashamed of being seen in such a company for such a purpose. My bitterness of feeling was seen, for I took no pains to conceal it. One professor, Rüdiger, an immensely tall and awkward man, who had some little wit, made us all laugh by saying that the new coat-of-arms of Halle would be exhibited to-day. I knew nothing of a new coat-of-arms for Halle, and I asked him what the design was. "An ass treading on roses," he answered.

The king came. It was some time before he had taken his place in the audience-room and was ready to receive us. In the midst of his suite stood Jerome, a truly unkingly figure, an insignificant physiognomy, youthful features, his eyes dull, his bearing ungracious. In a brief speech he assured us that the interests of science were dear to him, and that he should cherish the university.

One figure which I saw among the courtiers I could not look upon but with sorrow; it was Johannes von Müller. He was stoutly and broadly built, not very easy in his bearing, indeed, but his features were both expressive and handsome. I could not help seeing that he shrunk from my eye. Clothed in the stiff and richly-gilded uniform of an official, he looked like a servant at a hotel, and I only missed the porter's staff to distinguish him from that functionary.

After the audience was over I called on Müller. More than three years had now passed since I made his acquaintance under very different circumstances from the present, and now we were brought face to

face again. Both of us had been subject to the same hostile power, with no hope of deliverance; in that our fortunes seemed to be alike — alike in boundless misfortune. That that was no real reason for the difference in our present situation was perfectly apparent; — that he should be my highest director in scientific affairs, and that I should be in terms of subjection to him. We talked on the valiant deeds of the past and the fears of the present. All hope had passed from him, he had wholly given up, and did not conceal it. After I had spent a half hour with him he sorrowfully reached me his hand; tears stood in his eyes. "You must go," he said; "too long conversation between us will be suspicious." That was the man who had preserved and given expression to the great attempts of Germany in a mighty past! Such an interview was to me very painful. It was hard, indeed, to have the honor which I had cherished for him now turned into pity.

Rarely broken in upon by such occurrences as this, my life ran on in great quietness. That mental activity which had pervaded professors and students alike before the war had almost entirely vanished, and I was compelled to lead a hermit's existence, and live in the communion of my own thoughts. Not only was the number of hearers much reduced, but the exchange of writing and letters on scientific subjects almost ceased. A cloud rested on the whole land. I had begun to love Germany, and to conceive of it, not as an aggregation of states, but as a unit, and I cared as little to see its soul robbed of

its body, as I did to see a body when deprived of its soul. And when one of my friends tried to comfort me regarding the shattered condition of Germany by saying that political matters have no connection with scientific matters, and that science does not depend upon the boundaries of nations, I only felt how deeply and alone I was sunk in my grief over the broken and distracted land.

We received a visit in Halle from the then renowned phrenologist, Gall. He had just been delivering lectures in Berlin, where he had created a great sensation, and had found both defenders and opponents. Gall was a man of singular character, and his teachings on the form of the skull and the influence which it exerts upon the talents, and, indeed, the whole mental constitution, was, as is well known, grounded on his view of the brain as a continuance of the spinal marrow, and thus of great scientific value. Gall belonged to the number of those men who believe they find great certainty in one-sided observations and in the combination of their results. I have scarcely ever met a man less troubled with doubts of any kind than he. He seemed to have no suspicion of the possibility of such doubts, and so he proceeded with a confidence which was wonderful. Wherever he came, not only that body of men crowded around him, who, troubled with problems which they could not solve, sought an easy solution, but also the most distinguished men. It is hard to convey an adequate idea of the sensation which he produced. To have at constant command such a convenient and unerring test of the

talents and inclinations of men as the protuberances of the skull furnish, was, indeed, very attractive. Models of heads, numbered according to Gall's theory, such as those of great and loved authors, began to be found in every house, and even had a place on the toilet-tables of ladies. Instead of reading the works of a writer, or of listening to the melodies of a musical composer, in order to judge of the talents of either, people were inclined to make the acquaintance of candidates for popular honors in order to examine their heads, and decide from the protuberances of the skull whether to praise their works or condemn them. The mothers felt of the heads of their children to see whether a future thief or a murderer were among them. Happily, the means of deciding were not strongly marked enough for the popular apprehension. Over the organs of murder-loving and thievery the hand of the mother slipped lightly and did not discover them. On the other hand, her loving pressure had no difficulty in discerning the tokens of future greatness, and her gentle fingers passed at once to the eminences on whose heights she espied the promise of the coming scholar, artist, lawgiver, or hero. Now-a-days we find few of the phrenological models which were once so much in vogue; they must be looked for among the old-fashioned and dusty furniture in our garrets. And phrenologists are no longer to be found, excepting as a kind of sect in England, largely in Scotland, and scarcely at all in France.

Gall first made his appearance as a lecturer in a large hall, and surrounded by the skulls of men and

beasts. Every word displayed his perfect confidence in the truth of his theory, and he expressed himself with all the ease of conversation. The whole array was imposing, and his comparing the skulls of men with those of beasts was somewhat novel and striking. He compared the crania of notorious thieves with those of magpies and of ravens; those of murderers with those of tigers and lions. A glimmering of truth was to be seen even in his erroneous views, and that which satisfied the superficial and light-minded was just what roused and disturbed deeper spirits.

Goethe came over from Weimar merely to hear Gall. He had often, when in Halle, been a hearer of my lectures, but unseen by me. While I was at my desk, Goethe would enter an adjoining room, and, seating himself close by the door, follow me without my knowing it. I learned this fact from Wolf, the great philologist.

I wanted to see Goethe as Gall's hearer. The attitude and countenance of a listener in a public assembly have always been interesting to me. Goethe sat amid the auditory in a truly imposing manner. Even his still attention had something commanding in it, and the tranquillity of his unchanged features could not conceal the interest he felt in the subject of the lecture. At his right sat Wolf, at his left, Reichardt. Gall proceeded with his exposition of the organs indicating various talents, and in his free way of expressing himself he did not hesitate to select examples among his hearers to illustrate his theory. He spoke first of such

skulls as have no specially-marked protuberances, but which, developed on all sides alike, indicate a perfectly-balanced character; and a rich illustration of this, he said, was seen in the head of the great poet, who honored the lecture with his presence. Everybody looked at Goethe. He remained unmoved; a slight expression of irritation struggled across his countenance, but it at once settled into a slight, ironical smile, which, however, did not affect the calm and imposing tranquillity of his features. He next came to the musical faculty or organ of harmony. Now it was the turn of my father-in-law. The protuberance which indicates this organ lies close by the temples. In very truth, Reichardt was wonderfully developed just at that point; and after Gall had called attention to his skulls and his copper-plates, he turned it to Reichardt. Now, my father-in-law was completely bald, and with his crown covered with pomade and powder, it really seemed like a skull got ready for the entertainment. At last he came to Wolf. The organ of language lies just above the eyes and close by the nose, and it is a fact that Wolf was remarkably full just at that point. But Wolf wore glasses; so, when Gall began to speak of the organ of language, Wolf knew that he was to be served as Goethe and Reichardt had been before him. I was convulsed to see the veteran philologist meet the wishes of Gall. He quietly took off his glasses, turned his head in all directions, and looked very much as though his neck was a pivot on which a skull was turned by an automaton, instead of being held in the hand of

the lecturer. The confirmation which Gall's theory received in those three eminent men had great influence on all the spectators. But after he had gone I delivered a few lectures on the subject, in which I showed the other sides which oppose Gall's theory, and which he had passed over without any mention. And, although the feeling of conviction which Gall produced soon passed away, his lectures had this one good effect, that they stimulated my friend, the great anatomist Reil, to enter upon that elaborate study of the brain which has added to his fame.

Among the young men whose acquaintance enriched my Halle life, were the two brothers Grimm, who were no less remarkable for their sincere, earnest, and disciplined character, than they were for their persistent devotion to study. William Grimm had long been employing himself in Cassel with translating old Danish poems. A trouble with the heart had brought him to Halle to consult Reil. He had a room in the same house in which I had a tenement, and for a year I saw him almost daily. He was then at work on Danish songs, and it was always a pleasure to me when I could be of any help to him. His employment had in it something very attractive to me, and it was delightful to get glimpses into a study so far removed from my own, and at the same time to become acquainted with a man of so thorough scholarship and so kindly ways. Brentano was in Halle at the same time with Grimm, and of course the older German poetry was largely talked over among us.

Otherwise my life in Halle was now very solitary. I lived, indeed, in the closest intimacy with my friend Blanc, and through his means became well acquainted with Rienäcker, a somewhat distinguished preacher of the Calvinistic or reformed church. Thus I was drawn during my stay in Halle entirely to the Calvinists, and was completely cut off from near relations with the Lutherans, the prevailing party there. Although Christianity was always growing more and more weighty in my eyes, yet I cared little for those differences which merely spring from clashing dogmas. I partook of the Lord's Supper in the Calvinistic church, and enjoyed it, interpreting it to myself after my own way. I mention these things because this indifference to matters of theology was one step, and a necessary one, in the development of my mind. The recollections of youth and childhood had then a secret power over me; there passed over my soul a certain real though transitory unrest which would not be stilled, for I could not help remembering that there lived in Lutheran Denmark friends and relatives of mine, and in the best informed classes too, who would have been scarcely more shocked to learn that I had become a Catholic, than that I had partaken the Lord's Supper in a Calvinistic church.

I must here speak of Schelling, and the manner in which he first attracted the attention of the general public,—a task not always accomplished by a philosopher. The larger the number of his followers became, the more apparent became his efforts to lay a deeper foundation for metaphysical speculation than

had ever been done. He is distinguished from almost all other philosophers, I may say, in this, that when he had proclaimed his profoundest results, and had exercised an influence upon his age which never could perish, he did not publish a system, complete in itself, and which should remain in the fixed form that its author should give it through all time; a system like those which are educed by some in studying the philosophy of history, who find that their work when concluded is already on the way to ruin. Schelling was in the truest sense a philosopher, just for this reason, that while following the trains of his own thought, and battling with adversaries on all sides, he had his hardest contest with his own self. The treatise on the nature of Human Freedom, which appeared in 1809, must have surprised those who had supposed that the logical formalities on which philosophy had hitherto rested were to be its eternal foundations. To me this treatise seemed all the more weighty, and drew me nearer to Schelling, because his view of history, as embracing the connection of man with his surroundings, had seemed to me the sublimest theme that speculation could reach. That this conception lay at the basis of my first production, Frederick Schlegel had shown shortly before the appearance of Schelling's treatise. That the relation of man with his surroundings must be an intimate one, must have been clear to one who looked at the world with the comprehensive view which I took, and who had studied, as I had done, the whole course of historical development. And so, when Schelling's treatise

appeared, I felt that I had found a great ally, and that the idea which had become so precious to me would now become speedily adopted by all, and give a new impetus to the whole study of man.

Among the friends whom I gained about this time was Achim von Arnim, who, before the war and in the fairest time of my life, made a long tarry at Giebichenstein, and lived in the closest intimacy with Reichardt and his family. He had a noble and truly marked figure ; he spoke little, always appeared quiet, even reserved, and yet his mildness was so attractive as to draw forth universal confidence. He had at first devoted himself passionately to the study of physics, and in Gilbert's Annals are some treatises by him which called forth much attention. When I knew him he had wholly given up these studies, but he took some interest in new discoveries. He had become wholly a poet.

In poetical literature there was a general character widely different from that which prevailed in philosophical literature. In the latter it could not be denied that Kant had laid the foundation of a new school ; that the discovery that all visible objects move according to established laws around the unchanging sun of the consciousness, was to philosophy what the theory of Copernicus was to astronomy. Still, Kant was crowded out of sight by later men, and the Kantians, as they called themselves, played a subordinate part in the subsequent developments of philosophy. It was necessarily so ; for, although Kant's system did not cease to be the

basis for those which came after, yet it seemed fixed and ill-adapted to the widening wants of men.

In poetry it was different. That Goethe had inaugurated a new epoch, was generally confessed; the opposition, which wanted to adhere to the contracted views of the past, was put down by the Schlegels and Tieck, and regarded as of little authority. All young poets crowded around Goethe; and as it was a necessity of the times for those who would be philosophers to praise Kant, so was it of those who would be poets to extol Goethe. There was thus formed a kind of genius-worship which assumed for itself a narrow exclusiveness, and which succeeded in laying the foundation for that unshaken European celebrity which Goethe's mighty spirit had accorded to it with wonderful unanimity in a time when no talents, however splendid, seemed likely to receive any recognition.

The founding of the university of Berlin is in point of fact one of the most important movements in the history of modern Germany. If we compare the magnitude of the work with the original intention of government concerning it, we must be amazed. The government would have regarded Halle as a favorable model to follow, and to attain to the liberal endowment of Halle would have been viewed as all that the public needs demanded. It would have rejected at once the thought of endowing a university adequate to meet the wants of the age. And yet, just at the time when the country seemed half ruined, when all resources seemed cut off, when one of the richest provinces was in the

hands of the enemy, and a sorrowful future seemed to await the whole land, an effort was put forth which, even after ten years of perfect peace, would have seemed incredible. And how was the grand result brought about? By the conviction that Prussia was called in this time of her humiliation to establish a central point of influence which should be felt through all departments of life and service throughout Germany.

In fact the tone of feeling in Berlin during this sad time was wonderful. The capital was occupied by hostile troops, the king held himself near the Russian frontier, and yet, while the city and the land were outwardly conquered, only a fragment of the people felt subdued in spirit. The enemy had taken the fortresses, routed the army, and made us almost weaponless; but there were forces rallying, unseen by our foes, which would take the place of those we had lost, and there were victories daily gained which were never publicly recorded. Our victors could not see whither the currents were tending. Men like Schleiermacher, who could discern the spirit of the times, were joined in close alliance, and the whole temper of the country was roused. Never before were king and people in such intimate sympathy. The army itself eagerly looked forward to the time when it should retrieve its disgrace. When the war began every one was taken by surprise, the army was made powerless by the sudden attack, the fortresses opened their gates before they were fairly invested; but now on the distant eastern frontier the surprise was past, the

courage of the army revived, and the bravery displayed at Dantzig and Graudenz ought to have taught the enemy that the old German spirit had returned. From this time every Prussian felt inwardly strong.

At that critical epoch Fichte stepped forward, and with wonderful courage uttered words of freedom under the very eyes of our victors. Schleiermacher, too, gave strength to the growing German feeling, and added the sanctions of religion to the struggle for hearth and altar. Both of these men spoke to the heart of the nation. It will always be hard to gain Germans over to any superficial scheme which looks only to the present hour. The French are different. The Frenchman undertakes the work of the hour without any harassing doubts. He has no concern with past or future ; all that he has to do with is the work just before him. For the accomplishment of that, everything is laid under contribution. The German cannot look at things in this way ; many a doubt perplexes him, and the favorable moment is past before he is ready to act. His whole life is penetrated with speculation, reaching out backwards and forwards, and uniting all circumstances in a chain of cause and effect. Every deed is in itself but a link in this chain. The little facts of daily life do not absorb him ; he glances at them and lets them fly. And yet his spirit is always active ; events are woven together and their issues upon ages to come are made apparent. So Germany was called upon to lead in the Reformation, and so this war of freedom from the French

yoke was made by far-reaching German minds the means of giving our nation a character which will unfold itself for generations to come.

All hope resting upon Prussian prowess had disappeared. Every one looked with confidence to the founding of the new university at Berlin. That city had before been by no means a central light in literature and science. The French superficiality introduced by Voltaire had first got possession, and this was at last driven out by the genuine German feeling pervading even the uneducated classes. Still, a kind of half-German, half-French Academy existed there, conferring little credit upon the city, and unable to effect any perfect result. And yet this city, little thought of by Germans, possessed by enemies,—this wasted city was suddenly to be transformed into the centre of the brightest hopes for Germany.

The founding of the university was a grand event. The most varied voices were heard in consultation about it, and William von Humboldt conducted all the plans. The counsels of such men as Wolf, Schleiermacher, and Reil, were much valued. All the arrangements were planned upon the most liberal scale; the most eminent scholars were invited to its chairs, and invitations thither were eagerly sought. Only in relation to speculative philosophy were there serious doubts. At the outset it was the deliberate purpose to establish a philosophical chaos; a great contrast with what was afterwards determined by the authorities. The value of speculation in its relation to German culture was granted,

but not openly confessed. Natural history seemed to be a department which would be particularly neglected. There seemed to be a great inclination to adopt the atomic theory as the basis of research in philosophical inquiries, merely because it had met with great favor in England and France. There was a strong inclination to accept Kant's views, and to adapt them to an empirical construction of natural sciences. William von Humboldt thought, however, that no philosophical system existed which demanded recognition. With regard to men, his view was that it was best for youth of promise to pass through the rank of tutor (*privat docent*), and rise to eminence as they should merit it. One professor of philosophy would certainly be needed, and for that post Fichte was already in Berlin; and, was another needed, Schleiermacher, besides being a theologian, was very deeply read in philosophy.

I will not deny that I cherished very ardent hopes of being transferred to Berlin. I saw myself situated in a field from which selections would most probably be made, and it was a long time before I surrendered my hopes. I did not fully realize what stood in my way. The serious view which I took of natural science as a unit, independent and comprehensive, the foundation of a thorough insight into nature, was regarded as mere folly. This was the most cherished thought of my life, yet I found myself standing alone in it; they who were called philosophers lived in abstractions wholly sundered from nature; while naturalists went to the opposite extreme of rejecting everything which could not be

brought under the cognizance of the senses. But in my view nature does not admit of that dialectical play which has within late years found such sport in historical studies. I believe that natural science has in every age had some special idea within itself, growing out of the exigencies of the times. As men knew more of nature, natural science went on expanding and gaining a comprehensiveness, linking several branches together, and showing the law of unity within them all. And I am fully persuaded that a sound system of natural science will be the basis of all knowledge; but its development is the work of time, not of any one man. In this conviction I stand almost alone to-day, as I stood almost alone then.

The struggle which I had to meet was, however, no open one, in which I might, perhaps, win some honor. It was hidden from public view, and I was powerless. Schleiermacher, who had great influence in the affairs of the Berlin university, wrote to me often. My call thither seemed sometimes just at hand. Suddenly everything changed. I was charged with forging my facts, and with so misstating them as to lead my hearers into error. I answered these charges through the agency of a friend by saying that attacks of this kind had no value unless they were open; and if, being openly assailed, I should be found guilty, I entreated not to be spared. I stated that my published works had been for years before the world without being attacked by any naturalist. I admitted that the philosophy of nature regarded facts from a different stand-point from

the science of natural history. The founding of that philosophy as a province of thought must be the work of time. What seemed to be a perversion of facts was only the result of taking a stand-point of observation different from theirs. And even if there should be an effort put forth to nip in the bud the science of nature which I was seeking to establish, yet its influence would not be lost; it had already gained ground enough to maintain and perpetuate itself. And of this science as I comprehended it, I could say in the words of Gamaliel, "If this be of God it will endure; if not, it will not be able to stand." I felt in my heart persuaded that natural science had reached a point where its comprehensive character would be seen, that it was the true development of our age. I called attention to the fact that the naturalists of Berlin formed already quite a school, and that their names might be joined with the savans of London and Paris. My own work, I stated, would be to forego any mere empiricism, any claims to great discoveries, and all researches which demanded exceedingly protracted investigations. I would still remain an humble learner in this field, and only make use of those facts whose existence should be confessed by all.

But all these statements and explanations proved unavailing. The general distrust in my scientific accuracy was too deeply seated to be moved.

But this was not all. A man whose name was commonly regarded as a pillar in science, although among naturalists his claims were seriously doubted, was pointed out as my opponent. In a letter from

Schleiermacher, I read, "You are, as I hear, openly attacked by Goethe. You must be roused up to meet him as openly. However much you owe to him, however much you honor him, you must not spare him." The positiveness with which Schleiermacher wrote surprised me. I had just received a friendly letter from Goethe, and in the second volume of his work on Light he had spoken with favor of me.

The death of my children, the growing pecuniary embarrassments which oppressed me, my constrained position as a teacher, tended constantly to dampen what hope still remained to me. Danger of every kind seemed to surround me. Professor Sternberg, of Marburg, was shot, and I might be made in like way a victim to the machinations of my enemies. Just then, too, Reil went to Berlin, and with him vanished my last prop. Nothing seemed to remain for me at Halle.

I then made a visit to Berlin. Reil and Schleiermacher joined in my behalf, and asserted that they could not spare me; that my views of nature must be the basis of all their teachings. But even this decisive step was unavailing. They then privately stepped in to remove the pecuniary embarrassments which stood in my way. They promised to support me out of their own income till my efforts should induce the conviction that their services would be unnecessary. Still, the enmity of my opponents was too formidable, and nothing could be done in my behalf. Yet the zealous friendship of these two men was very cheering to me, — one of them the

most subtle of dialecticians, the other the most patient and thorough of naturalists,— and I gained a confidence for the future which was of great service in those times of trouble. How could I despair when two such men stood up to sustain and help me?

## CHAPTER VIII.

CALL TO BRESLAU — TRIP TO JENA AND BERLIN — NAPOLEON'S RECEPTION AT WEIMAR — GOETHE — DINNER AT GOETHE'S — HIS ONSLAUGHT AT DINNER — SCHLEIERMACHER AS PROFESSOR AT BERLIN — THE FACULTY AT BERLIN — BOECKH, BEKKER, NIEBUHR — GATHERINGS OF BERLIN SAVANS — ARRIVAL AT BRESLAU — STEFFENS'S LOVE OF GERMANY — COMMENCEMENT OF PROFESSORSHIP AT BRESLAU.

AND here commenced a new epoch in my life. Von Schuckmann, the minister of state, who controlled the affairs of all the Prussian universities after Count Dohna withdrew from that post, determined to revive the languishing university at Frankfort on the Oder, to transfer it to Breslau, and to join it with the Theological Seminary in that city. Silesia, the richest province in the kingdom, with a million and a half of inhabitants, was without a university, and there was evidently no need for one at Breslau in addition to that at Frankfort. Schuckmann's design was to transfer the Frankfort students to Breslau, as a nucleus, to give the older professors an *emeritus* rank, to retain the younger, and to call able men from abroad. The university of Frankfort, being old, was rich; and its funds would be very serviceable in commencing at Breslau on the scale which he wished. Bredow undertook the duty of carrying out the details of the plan, and

worked with great zeal. He came to Halle evidently with the design of securing able men for the professorial chair. I was then lecturing on physics, and was engaged chiefly in galvanic experiments. Bredow attended one of my lectures, and then invited me to his room and asked me if I should like to be called to Breslau. The reader can conceive my joy. A quite attractive salary was proposed; the thing was soon settled, and in a few weeks I received my formal call.

But before I could enter upon my new and isolated life at Breslau, and tear myself from a home which had become very dear to me, I could not resist the desire to visit my old friends at Jena, and especially Goethe, who, although not very aged, was now about sixty. Two years before, in the winter of 1809, I had with my family visited Fromann, who seemed one of the nearest friends I had at Jena. He and his wife had received us with a most cordial welcome. We spent the last days of the year at his house; and the few weeks which I spent there I shall not forget. Never did I feel more clearly how tragic an element had been in my life. It was in a great measure through the cheerful and social influence of Fromann's family that my youth had been so indescribably rich in Jena, and his house had been the gathering-place where the great lights of the town had gathered themselves together. Here appeared Goethe; here I saw the Schlegels, Tieck, and Schelling. It seemed to be the field on which these knightly spirits had celebrated their spiritual tournaments, and had carried off their victorious

palms. The dawn of the new century, announcing a new era for science, here began to gleam; but that day of promise had passed without its fulfilment. Political changes had disturbed old friendships, and with the loss of our old national feeling of unity, those knightly contests had all ended. And when I came again to Jena, and found myself surrounded by all that was left from those fair days, it was natural that I should give free expression to my feelings. In Halle, where I lived among friends, I had been in the habit of uttering my thoughts on the French domination without reserve. But my Jena friends were amazed when I expressed myself with them in my wonted manner. The position of the Duke of Weimar was certainly an unenviable one. In the days of his flight, when in his absence the duchess had to receive the exasperated Napoleon, she had borne herself in so imposing a way that he was forced to respect and even to reverence her. The duke was suspected by the French Emperor, the duchy was overrun by French spies, and it is plain that it was necessary to suppress every expression which might compromise the Weimar court. I soon saw this, and during my stay in Jena I governed myself accordingly.

But all the more was I surprised at the power which Goethe exercised over all the judgments of the circle in which I moved. But when it is remembered how long this royal spirit had ruled in Weimar, and been honored as the mightiest in Germany; how the intense mental conflicts into which I had been plunged raged most fiercely around him

without affecting his nature, and then had died away leaving him still unchanged, still standing as the one only beacon left, and only gleaming the more brightly in the deepening gloom, it can be understood why he ruled with such unquestioned supremacy all the minds who came under his influence.

Already, in the opening years of the century, there were some who saw that Goethe's journeys to Italy, particularly the second, formed the turning-point in his development. The sharply-defined individuality, the fearless confidence of his earlier years, then seemed to cease ; to take their place had come a quiet humility which did not betoken such strength and richness of genius as the former qualities had done. The later manifestations of his mind were commonly supposed to be well and truly hit off by Novalis, in his happy saying that Goethe loved less to deal with subjects which were greater than he, than with those which he could perfectly master, and in whose delineation he was most at home. I shared in this judgment of him, indeed, but the results which were drawn from it I could noways perceive were legitimately drawn, and they seemed to me all the more untrue, in view of the entire dependence on his judgment which was manifested in the circle around him, and which seemed to grow even when the infirmities of age were creeping upon him and cramping and enfeebling his powers. The earlier writings of Goethe had had a charm for me which the later ones lacked. The great power through which the language of his people seemed

in his hands transformed into another and a nobler tongue, the strength which, when he began to speak, went forth in an influence which had no limits, the invincible might with which he attacked and overthrew what seemed to him unworthily idolized,—all these had seemed to me in my early years like trumpet-tones which summoned me, too, to victory. His later works did not fulfil those older expectations. His views then seemed to be in agreement with the times in which he lived. But I afterwards saw that his life, and the works which gave his life its value, were a complete history in themselves, and were unrelated to the great era through which he was passing. There is hardly another author whose life has been so parallel to the manner in which a state develops itself, and where the epochs of youth, manhood and old age have so marked a historical rise and decline, as Goethe. In studying his life, no stage of his development can be passed by. Even the apparently retrograde course of his later years has its significance, if we look at his life as a unit. In his last works there can still be discerned the tokens of the youth mightily struggling to express itself, and in his earliest works can be seen that earnest effort to attain perfect symmetry which characterized the works of his declining years. And it is because this is developed in it that Eckermann's book has its great value in my eyes; for there Goethe appears as one banished—one who has bid adieu to the works of his life, and who wanders like a majestic old man among the ruins of a great, fallen state. It was not exhaustion which came upon him

in his old age; it was rather the slow and gradual decay of a mind which enclosed, as few minds do, its own history within itself. And, therefore, in Goethe we must carefully discriminate between the process of unfolding in his vehement youth and the steps of his matured mind, where, instead of progress, we find a growing tendency to narrowness. The transition from these two sections of his existence contains the secret of his life; it was what he could not discover, and what at the same time he knew; it brought into unity what he *would* do and what he *could* do, and showed in a manner not to be gainsaid that the former outweighed the latter. It was for him to amass literary treasures no less precious than the art treasures which have come to us from the Greeks; to others, no less perplexed than he with the confused political problems of the time, he left the task of looking forward and determining what was to be done. And when Goethe gave up the future as a thing in which he had no part to perform, his spirit began to display the narrowness which marked his old age; not that his creative genius was lamed at all, but merely that it withdrew within itself, and became a thing of the past. Even what the passing times, so rich in all the fruits of human speculation, gave him, contributed only to the formation of his own character alone, and what promised a glowing future for the other mighty spirits of the time, was of worth to him only to solve the problem of his own past life. He died in the largest sense full of years. It was his task to watch over and cherish his life to the last, not so much

for what it should be as for what it had been ; and when his veins began to stiffen, and his limbs to be heavy and clumsy, and his tongue to be slow, when he seemed to walk like an old man among the graves of buried friends, he still retained that noble bearing which showed that he turned to the past to read the undeciphered riddles of the future. His death was in perfect harmony with his life. He had proudly turned away from his times ; in his old age he did not seek to learn of any living man, but haughtily stood alone ; but we, looking upon that fading form, were compelled to listen to its enfeebled words till they ceased at last in death.

Goethe came over to Jena, and I saw him for the first time after seven years of separation. His presence had a powerful influence upon me. He accompanied me to the mineralogical collection, which, under the management of Prof. Lentz, had become valuable. I was then busily employed on my *Hand-book of Mineralogy*. Goethe was a well-known geognostical dilettant ; his repeated journeys to Carlsbad had drawn him into numerous geological investigations, and our conversation was not confined to one direction, but ranged over the whole field of science. We spoke of his optical studies, and of his views on the metamorphosis of bones. Goethe complained bitterly of the manner in which some naturalists had abused his confidence, publishing his discoveries, communicated to them by himself, as if they were their own. This conversation took me back to the old times. Goethe became more amiable and cheerful, and I enjoyed a degree

of happiness which for years I had not experienced. Goethe invited my wife, Fromann's family, and myself, over from Jena to dine with him. We found at the table besides Goethe's wife only Meyer, Riemer, and the poet Werner. Goethe was very lively; the conversation turned on a number of subjects, and the unconstrained and yet suggestive remarks of our host pleased and exhilarated us all. He could make himself agreeable even to the ladies.

At length he turned to Werner, who had had little part in the conversation thus far. "Now, Werner," said he, in a quiet, but at the same time authoritative way, "have you, nothing with which you can entertain us,—no poems which you can read to us?" Werner plunged his hand into his pocket, and hastily drew out a mass of crumpled, dirty papers, so that I was amazed, and by no means approved of the request of Goethe, which promised to extinguish all free and interesting conversation. Werner began to repeat a number of sonnets in a shocking manner. At last I was compelled to give some attention to one of them. The subject was the beautiful appearance of the full moon as it swam in the clear Italian sky. He compared it to a holy wafer. This stiff simile enraged me, and had on Goethe an unpleasant effect; he turned to me. "Now, Steffens," asked he, outwardly calm, while he tried to suppress his exasperation, "what say you to that?" "Mr. Werner," I answered, "had the kindness to read a sonnet to me a few days ago, in which he expressed his regret that he had come to Italy too late, and I now believe that

he was right. I am too much of a naturalist to wish for an exchange between the moon and a hallowed wafer; the emblem of our faith loses as much in the comparison as the moon." On this Goethe gave up to his feelings, and expressed himself with a warmth which I had never before seen in him. "I hate," said he, "this bald religious sentimentalism; do not believe that I will show it any quarter. Neither on the stage nor here will I listen to it, in whatever guise it may appear." After he had talked in this strain for some time, and with louder and louder tones, he became quiet. "You have destroyed the pleasure of my dinner," said he, seriously; you know that such pitiful poetical pretences are an abomination to me; you have made me forget my duty to the ladies." He now gained complete command of himself, turned with language of apology to his wife and mine, began to talk on indifferent subjects, but rose soon and retired. We then saw that he felt himself deeply wounded, and that he was going to compose his mind in solitude. Werner was like one annihilated.

When I visited Goethe before, Riemer was not, as now, a member of the family. He was then private tutor to the children of William von Humboldt, and was then in Italy. I met him for the first time now at Goethe's table. Shortly after dinner I went where Goethe was, and found him perfectly composed, and having seemingly forgotten the affair. He entered into cheerful conversation, and showed me some optical phenomena which were interesting him much at that time. When I left him, Riemer

waited upon me evidently with something on his mind. He began to speak of the affair at the dinner-table. "What you have seen to-day," said he, "is of such rare occurrence that I scarcely remember ever witnessing anything like it before." I assured him that eleven years before, when I saw Goethe often, I had neither witnessed such an affair nor did I believe such possible. Riemer went on to say, "You know how everybody busies himself about Goethe; how all his expressions, and the least things which he does, are caught up, and become themes for discussion in the newspapers. I must ask you to keep what passed to-day from getting into print." My first emotion at this request was indignation. "I may not presuppose," said I, "that you know anything about me; had you been acquainted with me, you would have seen that your request was entirely unnecessary; but this day has been so deeply interesting to me, and it has been such a rare experience to live to witness the majestic scorn of the great man of our age over the sickly sentimentalities of the times, that you need not fear my using it for town gossip. Your request is a natural one, but it was not needed with me."

Notwithstanding all, the affair got abroad, and was in every one's mouth. A great civil calamity could not have made more uproar in the circles of Jena and Weimar. I could have believed myself taken back to the times of Louis XIV., with Goethe's house the palace of a mighty king whose anger, fraught with the most dire effects, shook all the neighborhood with fear.

I parted from the great poet then for the last time. He was sixty years of age; he lived yet twenty years, but I never saw him again. He was all calmness when I left him; every trace of the anger of that well-remembered hour at dinner had left him, and he was his own serene self again. His unruffled brow was the fit mirror of his untroubled mind.

On the twenty-third of December, 1809, the cabinet order which called the university of Berlin into being was signed. On the ninth of September, 1810, the real opening occurred. Men of wide reputation filled all the faculties. In the theological, Schleiermacher stood before all others. There was no other whose impression upon the character of the whole population of Berlin was like Schleiermacher's; no one who so thoroughly diffused a national, a religious, and a thoughtful spirit, as he. The city was, so to speak, transformed by him, and in the course of a few years one would look almost in vain for the traces of the superficiality which had so long ruled there. What gave him his surpassing influence was this: that he was a true Christian, a patriotic citizen, a bold man, pure in soul, and in intellect strong, clear, and decided. Even children thronged to listen to him, and men and women of all classes in life. His resolve to offer himself in the service of his country had a kind of contagious power, and his brave way of not merely waiting for better times, but working to create them, kindled general admiration. His strong, kindling, and always cheerful spirit worked like tinder. For the

forces which he set in motion were no scattered and feeble powers; they were the unifying forces set in movement by a mind of the most comprehensive grasp. Thus working and swaying Berlin, I found my friend as he was entering upon that section of his life, the worth of which those who knew him can fully acknowledge.

Savigny, called from Landshut to Berlin, was at the head of the law faculty. He was even then the founder of a new school, which, despite all attacks, continually grew in power. Reil's name and reputation gave eclat to the medical department. Hufeland, too, was regarded a very valuable acquisition.

In the philosophical department was Fichte, who, although surrounded by opponents, yet exerted a deep influence. His natural genius, his sharp power of analysis, and his outspoken patriotism, gained him many friends who had no sympathy with his views. But he laid the foundation for a new philosophy of life, which, in shifting times like those, was of great value. The confusion into which all religious and scientific and municipal affairs were thrown, led every one to see how great the necessity was for a comprehensive intellect to appear which should grasp and master them all. And such a man must be trusted as a guide even if he were not completely understood. And Fichte proved himself able to meet the wants of the times. Through his influence was initiated that series of measures which resulted in the introduction of a system of education similar to that which Pestalozzi had introduced into Switzerland. Fichte did not

attempt to change the present, but he would form the future. Few then understood the power and skill involved in that movement, as I confess I myself did not, till events proved of what worth it was to the nation.

But Fichte's well-known relation to Schelling, the manner in which he had expressed himself regarding me, and the consciousness that my sympathy with nature had no response in him, held me aloof from him. Boeckh and Bekker were called to the chairs of philology in the university. It is well known how much the latter has in his quiet and thorough way advanced his department, and how much the former, who, even when called to Berlin, had attained a wide reputation for deep insight into the modes of living and thinking among the Greeks, has done to restore and further the study of antiquity. The celebrated Niebuhr, after devoting himself for some years to the weightiest duties of the state, especially in the financial department, and wielding a great influence in that position, withdrew from those duties, and entered upon those of a professor. The first lectures in the new university were delivered on the fifteenth of October, 1810.

Never did an institution of learning enter upon its career more brilliantly than this; never was the value of a great university more appreciated than here. We are referred with great pride to the founding of Göttingen, a hundred years before, as the most successful effort of the kind, and the founder of Göttingen is indeed immortal. But that work was carried through in times of peace; the

most eminent scholars were in secure possession of their reputation, and so the choice of professors was an easy one. A rich land easily furnished the needed means, and the king of England, as the ruler of Hanover, stood as the foster-father of the whole undertaking. But in Berlin a university arose with unprecedented quickness at a time when all the supports of the state seemed shattered, and in a time of deepest poverty money flowed forth in ample supplies. I never heard a word of criticism on the amounts which were required to found this noble and enduring monument of the wisdom and patriotism of the founders of the university of Berlin.

However various, however antagonistic even, the views of the Berlin professors might be, yet there was in those palmy days a tie of union between them all. How happy Niebuhr felt himself in his intimate companionship with kindred spirits; how zealously he gave himself to his classic work on Roman History, after a long interruption, every reader of his interesting letters<sup>1</sup> knows. The philologists, under the promptings of Schleiermacher, formed an association of great attractiveness. Their meetings were friendly gatherings, where they busied themselves with some Greek author, and where, it cannot be doubted, great gains were made to the cause of science. The naturalists, too, had their meetings, whose influence extended over the whole of Europe.

This painting of the beginning of the university

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Niebuhr.* New York: Harper and Brothers.

of Berlin may seem highly colored, but it is entirely impartial. I am writing the history of what I have lived to see, and I cannot deny that I looked with the fondest hopes at the opening of an institution with which I associated but one object of regret, and that was that I had no share in it. When I saw Wolf, Horkel, Reil, and Schleiermacher there, I certainly felt like one in exile, and yet my joy was pure, and my hopes for it strong.

Viewed from the relations under which I received and accepted the call to Breslau, the prospect of going to live in Silesia was by no means agreeable. I had a prejudice against the province; the Silesians were, in my imagination, a half-enslaved people. The predominance of the Catholic population, too, was not to my liking, and Breslau, in special, was inclined to bigotry in this faith. Nor could I forget that Frederick the Great tolerated the Jesuits in this province after the pope himself had taken away the rights and privileges of this order in many professed Catholic lands. It seemed to me, that in a fit of feeling peculiar to him he had failed to discern that they were among his greatest enemies, and that he had showed them too great leniency. It was, in my eyes, a sign of bad omen that the university was to be established in the building formerly occupied as the Jesuits' college.

Besides, the literary reputation of Breslau was not especially attractive, and there was a certain marked provincialism to be detected not only in books, but in reviews, in newspapers, and in conversation. There was, also, a narrow family and clique

spirit everywhere discernible, but made more particularly manifest at funerals, birthdays, and marriages. But what made my position especially repulsive was, that, having gone into voluntary exile from my own land, and having given my whole heart to the cause and hopes of Germany, I did not feel inclined to go into a district where all broad, national feeling was merged in mere local interests. Almost fourteen years I had lived in my adopted country, and I was now wedded to all that concerned its weal. I had watched the rising of that great spirit of philosophical inquiry which the opening of this century witnessed, and the men to whom I was indebted for my own enthusiasm in the cause of learning. Among them I had hoped to live and die; and it was a hard thought that I must take up my abode in a district which, though German in name, was as outside of the German national life and feeling as if it were still an Austrian province. And yet, when I considered the shattered condition of Germany, its dark and uncertain future, and the ruin of the once-flourishing Halle university, I felt that I could even welcome any new course of life which should take me away from these sad ruins of what had been so great and promising.

Breslau was at that time in a very disagreeable condition. The dry summer had left only an empty river-bed to the Oder; the city lay in a parched tract, and, surrounded by its levelled walls, it had the appearance of a place which had been taken and made defenceless. There were then from sixty to seventy thousand inhabitants, though since then

the number has greatly increased. And yet the city had a certain imposing appearance. The high houses, the huge store-houses, all indicated a place of importance; churches and old edifices testified to a not insignificant civic history, and the whole aspect of the place may be compared to that of an old man bearing in his face the marks of an active, honored and useful life.

The people were more friendly and more worthy of notice than I at first supposed, and many features in their character pleased me much. At the time of our removal to Breslau they were in a good deal of excitement; the professors and the students from Frankfort were pouring in. The former were nearly all strangers to me; Gass, alone, Schleiermacher's friend, was an old acquaintance. The work which now stood before me was new to me. A university was to be got together out of the most heterogeneous materials, and, although some of the arrangements had already been made, yet it seemed as if mine must be for some time an idle life. As I was to lecture on experimental physics, it may be supposed that I should find many deficiencies in my department, and this was really the case. Although the college-building occupied by the Jesuits was delivered over to us, yet its accommodations were only partially ample for our purpose. I had to content myself for some time with an ill-arranged hall, and many of my colleagues did not fare better. My official dwelling was not yet in readiness for me, and I had to hire one for a year.

At Breslau, I was able to renew my intimacy with

Carl von Raumer, whose reputation as a geologist is only equalled by that of his brother as a historian. There arose between the former and the sister of my wife an intimacy which culminated at length in their marriage. Carl von Raumer was remarkable for his serious earnestness of purpose. His mind was essentially introspective and religious. My first book, the one already mentioned as written at Freiberg, had drawn him to Halle, and a friend of his wrote me that that book exercised a decisive influence over his whole life. From Halle he went to Freiberg, and even while Werner's scholar he overturned and shattered his master's whole theory, which regarded granite as the basis of mountain formations. He and I did not always agree in our views, yet I always respected and admired his genius and his character.

The university was opened with solemn services. The professors were, I think, not all assembled; those from Frankfort were on the ground, but many of those called from abroad had not arrived. Link had been invited from Rostock as professor of chemistry and botany, and had been charged with the duty of forming a botanical garden. Heindorf had been called from Berlin as philological professor. Raumer, the historian, Wachler, Unterholzner, and Pas-sow, were expected. Thus it will be seen that the professorial corps was more than respectable, and much was expected of it. The students began to come in, mainly of course from different parts of Silesia. There was an unwonted and shocking prevalence of that boorishness and outlandishness among

them that I had already seen, though in less measure, at Jena. Their different *burschen* alliances were numerous, and so there were frequent outbreaks of student outlawry. This died away year by year; still, when I left Breslau, after thirty years of service, it had not wholly disappeared. They were generally a very ignorant set of young men, and there were plenty among them who had never heard even of the existence of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Some there were who had never heard of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller. I labored hard to soften the manners, to tame the fierceness, and to deepen the scientific interest of the young men. My brother professors helped in this good work, and we had the happiness of seeing much accomplished, only it was a slow and gradual process.

## CHAPTER IX.

STEFFENS'S MILITARY CAREER.—DARK POLITICAL PROSPECTS—GENERAL GNEISENAU—PUBLIC EXCITEMENT—STIR IN BRESLAU—SCENE IN STEFFENS'S LECTURE-ROOM—HIS LETTER FROM THE KING—THE PHILOSOPHER BECOMES LIEUTENANT—STEIN—BLÜCHER.

WHILST the university at Breslau was being formed, and while I continued to try to nurture to the best of my power those seeds of national independence which continued, in a cutting atmosphere, gradually, though by slow degrees, to fructify, the outward circumstances of the people grew darker and darker. Hard as was the outward tyranny of the invaders, their indirect influence was still more fearful and destructive. Nothing good could flourish under such a sway. In Breslau we heard much of the excesses during the war, and there were terrible recollections of outrages which had been committed by those troops of Southern Germany which had joined the French army. Thus had German feelings under French influence been turned against their own country, and the fearful time seemed now approaching when a Prussian army might combine with the French for the final subjugation of the land. The heaviest oppression which I had witnessed in Halle seemed a light misfortune when compared to this. I foresaw that if

the Prussians should learn to consider themselves as a part of the French army, and think it an honor to join them in the exultation of victory, the poison would be extended to the whole nation, and patriotism disappear wholly from the land.

I became acquainted with General von Grawert, then at Breslau, engaged in the topographical survey of Prussia, which was an important aid to my means of learning the form as well as structure of the Silesian mountains. His Adjutant-Major von Hiller also became my friend. This truly patriotic-minded officer was painfully alive to his unhappy position, and his grief was extreme to find himself compelled to act against his country's interests. My conversations with him increased my own fears. It was clear that Austria must arm for Napoleon, now that he was son-in-law to the Austrian emperor; hence almost every hope of resisting the subjugation of the whole of Germany was extinguished. Yet I could not quite abandon hope; and our news from Russia of the determination after a lost battle to retire and lay the country waste revived it in the shape that the insanity of boundless ambition might there receive a check.

If the then state of Prussia was so overwhelming to me in my retired existence, how must those have felt who to the last had cherished a belief in the possibility of a general resistance! When the gloomy night of German despair was at the darkest, the secret league was still kept up, consisting of the noblest spirits both in Austria and Prussia, and they were connected by a secret confederacy with many

among the German-minded English. Let the rulers who now sway the destinies of those three countries ever bear that league in mind, so powerless to all appearance then, and yet so mighty but a few years later: they will perceive in that time of cruellest oppression, that moment of impending destruction, and that rapidly succeeding liberation, a prophetic meaning for the guidance of future centuries.

Though occupied with the absorbing duties and interests of an infant institution, I continued to watch the political state of Prussia with passionate devotion. As the reports strengthened that Prussia, Austria, and other German states were likely to combine with France in hostilities against Russia, I longed to know whether such men as Gneisenau, Chasot, Eichhorn, and Schleiermacher, had yet abandoned their last hope of freedom. Those few might yet withstand the withering influence which paralyzed so many once undaunted patriots, an influence under which hope drooped and mutual confidence was changed into mistrust. Too many of the confederates, once secretly sworn to defend their country, strove amongst themselves, and a subdued people were armed to fight for the tyrant who oppressed them. But I felt that I had yet work to do. I could try to influence the minds of men, and invigorate their failing spirits; and in the religious belief in a future but most certain triumph I pursued the struggle, though unaided by the friends of more propitious times. At last I felt myself alone in the contest. I felt the pressing evils which bore down the boldest hearts as much as they did; but those

very evils left no time for those around me to understand and value the great principles for which I strove. The sun of life seemed to have set, and midnight darkness threatened to overwhelm me.

In my deepest need I was suddenly supported in a most unlooked-for manner. In the last days of 1812, Gneisenau, Chasot, Justus Grüner, Moritz Arndt, and afterwards Blücher, appeared in Breslau. In the agitated state of the people these arrivals occasioned great astonishment. The police watched their motions suspiciously, though without interference. I was brought into immediate connection for the first time with those men whose position and principles marked them as the hope of Germany. They passed much time in my house, when I took every precaution to exclude all other visitors. Sometimes we met at a tavern, and remained in close conference till midnight; a small room behind the public saloon was reserved for us. It is easy to suppose that these arrivals in Breslau were the subject of intense interest, and that I appeared in a new character by my connection with them. The president of the police said to me once that he knew that I had collected a little Coblenz, referring to the noble refugees who had made themselves extravagantly conspicuous in that place in the beginning of the revolution. I felt the remark to be a warning, but did not acknowledge the comparison.

This was my first personal acquaintance with Gneisenau. His features were handsome, and his tranquil but firm demeanor bespoke the gentleman

and the hero; his look was clear and open, and I never saw so happy a combination of self-respect and humility, of confidence and modesty. Like other distinguished German heroes, his views were formed more from observation than from books; but his regard for literary attainments in others was consequently still more to be admired. He never appeared to greater advantage than when he appealed for information on points where he was at fault, or frankly confessed any deficiency in knowledge. He had not the rapid apprehension, the sparkling wit, or the sarcastic vein which belonged to many commanders of the time, and which made them unpopular in society.

It seemed in the Prussian army as if the boldness which was ranked by military men as the highest of virtues was equally a merit in matters of the understanding, and the word of command was held as irresistible in controversy as at the head of a regiment. Many in mature life had sought by force of natural acuteness to repair the deficiencies of early systematic culture. Others had attended the universities, but had suffered the military ardor of the period to break off their half-completed studies; an imperious tone on subjects which ought to be discussed with inquiring reserve prevailed, especially in the unhappy year 1806. Those times had thrown back every strong mind upon its own resources. Never had men been called on to draw on their own powers to meet the exigencies of the time as the Prussian officers were then. The effort led

them on to victory, though it taught them overbearing manners.

I have had the happy lot to be in the society of many remarkable men, but I never regretted having a conversation interrupted as I have done when with Gneisenau. I never heard an unmeaning word from his lips; even on intellectual subjects there was in his modestly-expressed opinions an irresistible weight. Every one felt the depth of his reflecting powers, and perceived that when he spoke he thought more of that wherein he believed himself to fail than of the treasures of experience which he had gathered while assisting the greatest minds of the age to mature sound principles whereby to influence the fate of Europe. There was something princely in his look and mode of expression; when his manner was most humble he seemed to bow with conscious self-possession; he was the most chivalrous, the most liberal hero, that I ever saw; whoever had the happy fortune to excite his interest might firmly depend on his effectual support under every circumstance. I think with gratitude of his benevolent goodness to me from the time that he first entered my dwelling; every remembrance of him is most mournful, but most dear. He came to me a few days before his sudden and deeply-lamented death, with the dignified, firm carriage which he preserved even to old age. Never did the cholera seem to me such a cruel scourge as when it seized him for a victim.

The powerful influence of Arndt's writings in Germany, in 1805 and 1806, is well known. Whilst

other authors were awed to silence, he alone avowed his principles with intrepidity. His loud trumpet of war, which sounded its mighty alarm through the press, was not silenced through those unhappy years of tyranny. Calling for aid, it sounded on when hardly one sign of hopeful effort was apparent; he was destined to awake the sleepers,—to arm the nation to resistance by words of strength and virtue. From the time we met he was my true friend.

That the state and prospects of Germany were the subjects of our continual discussions, may easily be guessed. I then learnt that the secret league still existed in full force. We believed that we could trust England, though I must confess that neither the people nor their parliament seemed to afford that energetic sympathy with the oppressed continental powers which their position seemed to claim.

Austria seemed outwardly bound to France, but that this alliance would ultimately be more dangerous to her than the most unequal warfare, was as clearly understood in Vienna as in Berlin. The true-minded but timid Austrians, who feared a total overthrow in a contest with France, could not conceal from themselves that the treaty with her was a voluntary surrender of their liberties, while they could but seek an honorable fall by their resistance. Who has not learned from history that nations who have nerved themselves to the uttermost point of resistance have found the germ of revived independence at the very time when its extinction seemed inevitable? while a yielding, timid people,

like a hectic patient, fancies itself most secure when death is nearest, and, constantly deluded, resigns the last sickly hope only with the dying breath.

Everybody lived at that time in the intense excitement which prevails when a promise of being rescued from a wretched position has been observed, and the moment has not yet arrived for active exertion. The twenty-ninth bulletin had appeared; every artful expression in it seemed to endeavor vainly to conceal the news of a total defeat. The vision of a wonderful agitated future rose in every mind with all its hopes and terrors; it was breathed out at first in tones scarcely audible; even those who had believed that unbridled ambition would find its check in the land which it had desolated, could not realize the horrible destruction of a victorious army—an army which had for fifteen years, with growing might, excited first the admiration, then the terror, and lastly the paralyzed dismay of all the continental nations, and which had at length been overtaken by a fearful judgment, more wonderful than its conquests. But the strange event was there; reports no longer to be doubted crowded in upon us; the distant voice approached; the portentous words sounded clearer and clearer, and at last the loud call to rise was shouted through the land. Then did the flood of feeling burst from hearts where it had been long pent up; fuller and freer did it flow; then the long-hidden love to king and country flamed brightly out, and the dullest minds were animated by the wild enthusiasm. Every one looked for a tremendous crisis, but the

moment was not yet come for action, and while resting in breathless expectation, thousands and thousands became every hour stronger still to meet it.

It was said that Napoleon, accompanied only by one of his generals, had fled in a sledge through Silesia, travelling day and night. A postmaster had recognized him in Hainau. In Breslau all was excitement, all household duties and affairs were forgotten, everybody was collected in the streets, and all looked for the leader who was to order them to arm.

The first thought was for the safety of the king; it was feared that the remains of the French army might insure their safe retreat from Berlin by seizing his sacred person. Herr B. von L——, urged by this apprehension, addressed himself immediately to the king, and entreated him to leave Berlin and repair to Breslau, where, on ground not invested by the enemy, surrounded by faithful subjects, he might be safer than in a city actually in possession of the French. Those who surrounded the king, however, feared his taking so dangerous a step. A few days after this Herr von L—— was seized in the night by gendarmes, carried off to Berlin, and there imprisoned, though he was shortly afterwards liberated.

Though now at the very dawn of the long hoped-for day, I felt myself strangely depressed. Six years, I said to myself, have I been looking for this moment as the most blessed of my life, and here am I, in a city remote from the scene of activity; further south and west the liberators of Germany will assemble, and I must listen here inactively to accounts

of stirring events as to so many tales. I was in this discontented state of mind when the report gained ground that B. von L——'s proposal was to be granted; it was followed by orders to prepare accommodation for the king and his suite. And he arrived shortly after with his children. Hardenberg was with him, and a crowd of officers and generals followed. General v. York's intrepid action was soon reported, and the war was considered to have commenced, though no declaration had yet been issued. The influx of men, especially young ones, was enormous; every house was crammed, and the streets were all bustle. Scharnhorst had come. Gneisenau was expected. One feeling animated all. Business, circumstances, connections, friendship, were thought of only to devote them all to the one great object, but that object had still to be viewed only through a mist of painful doubt. The king had not approved of General v. York's open and brilliant demonstration; it was not impossible that he might be disgraced for it. The much-respected French ambassador, St. Marsan, accompanied the king to Breslau. The balance yet hung doubtfully, whether, notwithstanding the ardent longings of the whole nation, General v. York might be sacrificed, and common cause made with Napoleon to attack Russia, or whether, allied with Russia, war should be declared against Napoleon.

Among those assembled in Breslau was Bolkenstern, who had been sent by Gneisenau to Halle to keep up the interest of our secret correspondence; he belonged to Scharnhorst's school, that is, to the

young officers from whom Gneisenau expected most in the approaching war. I joined a large group of officers at his lodgings, and learned that the Gazette of the same day would contain the king's appeal for a voluntary arming. All the youth of Prussia were expecting it, but on looking over a copy we saw there was no allusion to the subject, and this paralyzing silence as to the enemy was discussed with great disapprobation and alarm. In an excitement of mixed joy and apprehension I left the meeting. I passed a disturbed, dreamy night, and awoke early to prepare for a lecture on natural philosophy, which was to be given at eight. I had, as usual, not communicated to my family what had passed at Bolkenstern's, but an idea seized me: "It is for you," I said to myself, "to proclaim the war; your position permits it, and what the court may afterwards determine will be indifferent to you." I never doubted of the king's determination to join with Russia. That it was utterly impossible to appeal to the youth of Prussia to fight for France was perfectly clear, but there might be reasons for keeping the enemy in suspense, though after the king's appeal they were incomprehensible to me. It is possible, I argued, that to preserve this deception my open act may be disapproved or even punished. I might be imprisoned — ruined. All this was unworthy of consideration at a moment of such urgency.

My class was not large, there was little interest in the university for philosophy, and the agitation of the time had thinned all the lecture-rooms. I was

just established in my new residence, of which the lecture-room and my study formed a wing. I was to give another lecture from eleven till twelve. The first was concluded, and no one had guessed what had occupied my whole mind throughout; it was that which I had for years striven for and longed for. I turned to my hearers and said,—

“Gentlemen, I shall give another lecture at eleven o’clock, but I shall choose a theme of all-absorbing importance. The king’s command for a general arming has appeared, or will do so to-day; I shall lecture upon that. Let my intention be generally known. If the other lecture-rooms are deserted, it matters not; I expect as many as this room will hold.”

The excitement in the town was unbounded, and the eagerness excessive to know in what direction the suddenly called out force was to be used. Thousands pouring into the town mixed with the inhabitants in the crowded streets, amidst troops, ammunition wagons, cannon, and loads of arms of every description. The slightest word calculated to throw any light on the state of things was caught up and repeated in every direction. Scarcely had the half of my two hours’ interval elapsed before a dense crowd streamed towards my house, and the lecture-room was full to suffocation; many stood at the windows, in the corridor, and the crowd of those who could not gain admittance extended even far into the street. It was long before I could make my way to my place. I had not yet seen my wife that day; my father-in-law and his daughter lived a story

above us, with Von Raumer ; my mother-in-law was with us. The crowd which streamed towards our house amazed them, but I think they must have guessed at my intentions. My wife did not dare to venture forth, but I sent her a tranquillizing message by a servant, with a promise to explain all to her by and by. I had passed the two hours in great agitation : what I had to say—the burden which I had groaned under for five years—shook my whole soul ; I was to be the first who was to cry aloud that the liberation of Germany, yes, of all Europe, was at hand. I sought in vain to arrange my feelings into words, but I fancied that good spirits were whispering help to me, and I longed for the time of lonely suspense to be over. One thought came clearly to my mind—I reproached myself that I had murmured at being banished to a remote province, and now that very corner had become the splendid centre whence a new era was to emanate, and my voice was to set the elements in motion. Tears gushed into my eyes. A short prayer tranquillized me, and I stood before the assembly. I know not what I said ; had I been asked at the moment that I ended, I could not have told a word. I had no new cause to proclaim—what I said was but the echo of the thoughts and feelings of every hearer. That after calling on the youth to rise, I added my determination to take my part and join the ranks, may well be guessed without my telling it.

At the close of my speech I hastened to tranquillize my family ; a few minutes after I was once more alone in my study. It is done at last, I thought,

and a load was taken from my heart. But new cares now claimed my thoughts; from that hour my whole position in life was altered; arms were now my profession, and how was I to follow it? I had taken counsel with nobody, and I felt wholly at a loss. Suddenly a thought struck me: I would go to Scharnhorst — he would guide and help me best. I had taken my hat, when a deputation from the students appeared: they begged me to continue my address in a larger hall, and named one which would contain five or six hundred hearers, and I was obliged to assent. I longed to go, but could not get away, the students thronged in so continually. A precious hour had thus elapsed, when Professor Augusti, then rector of the university, appeared; he had some important communication to make to me in private, and, uneasy as I felt at the request, I was very glad of the excuse to clear my room of students. I was on the best of terms with Augusti. He said in a solemn way that he came from the chancellor of state; that St. Marsan, the French ambassador, had hastened to the chancellor directly on hearing of my address. He had inquired what it meant. "We are," said he, "at peace with you, and look upon you as our allies, and now a teacher in the university dares to declare war against us, as if under the sanction of the king." Hardenberg had answered, "The feelings of the people, especially the youth of Prussia, can be no secret to you; we could not restrain the meeting — it was over before news of the intention reached us; the king dis- countenances it. Ask for an apology and it shall be

given; but I cannot conceal that any step taken against the speaker would make him a martyr, and such excitement would follow as would make our position most difficult."

The chancellor communicated to me through the rector that he had heard of my intention of resuming my address on the morrow. He did not desire me to refrain from expressing any of my own opinions, but entreated me not to mention Napoleon's name. By a sort of instinct I had avoided doing so in my first speech; I had feared that the name might give an air of personal hatred to my appeal, and rob it of the elevated tone of genuine patriotism. My friend left me, and I hastened to Scharnhorst. Colonel von Bayen, now minister of war, one of the most active and intelligent of our confederation, was already there. Scharnhorst embraced me, saying with joyful emotion, "Steffens, you do not know what you have done." I desired no greater praise; I foresaw that I, a quiet, retired man of letters, in the middle age of life, would make but a sorry soldier, but that to the war I must proceed.

I had only lately become acquainted with Scharnhorst; he was not an officer of the Prussian parade style, but seemed more like a philosopher in uniform. He spoke like a man of deep thought, fully imbued with his subject, which was always one of real importance, and on which his deliberately expressed sentiments carried an irresistible conviction; both in argument and action he persevered in his point dispassionately, but with determination.

It is told of a legate who was sent to Paris by

the Pope to transact business with Napoleon, that on one occasion he resisted the demands so obstinately as to make the Emperor almost despair of carrying his point. Napoleon at last left the room in high displeasure, and having ordered the legate to remain there till his return, shut him in, and did not reappear till evening, by which time he hoped that weariness and hunger would have induced submission. After a slight excuse from the Emperor, and a desire to resume the conference, the priest, without a syllable of apology, went straight forward with his business at the exact point at which it had been suspended. That was exactly the mode in which Scharnhorst always proceeded ; he never flinched in anything he ever undertook against Napoleon, not even when success seemed almost hopeless.

Few were acquainted with the extent of Scharnhorst's powers. Invincible in purpose, untiring in action, all the wisest of our military leaders looked to him as the centre of their movements. To this great man I turned in the most exciting instant of my life for guidance. I told him that I wished to join one of the detachments of the regular army, and I rejoiced to find that he approved. "We can," he said, "place you at once at head-quarters, where you may find work in which your former profession will be useful." He advised me to learn the duties of the service, as, at least in the beginning of the war, it was desirable that I should be much among the young volunteers whose minds I had excited. He also advised me to present a petition to the king, praying to be allowed to join the service in

whatever capacity his Majesty might please to appoint.

I was now perfectly at ease ; my sudden impulse had become a well-considered line of conduct. I forwarded my petition, and in a few days received the following gracious answer :—

“I afford you my entire approbation that you have not only excited the attendants on your lectures in the university to rise in their country's defence in the present imminent danger, but have also devoted yourself to the same praiseworthy service. To which laudable end I grant you leave of absence from your present duties until circumstances may permit you to return to them ; and I heartily wish that the example which you have set to younger men, of devotion to their country's cause, may be followed to the happy furtherance of the same.

“FREDERICK WILHELM.

“Breslau, February 16, 1813.”

I passed the days which intervened before I received the royal answer in most anxious suspense. The lectures were discontinued, and I gave myself up to wild conjectures as to my future destination. I had not confided to my wife the important step which I had taken, and I had told no one but my father-in-law, who fully approved of all that I had done. I was beset with students in great numbers, not only of Breslau, but from Berlin, and in my state of uncertainty their eagerness increased my perplexity.

On the 20th of February I received his Majesty's letter permitting me to wear officer's uniform and act as an officer, until he should see fit to promote me to the rank of one.

I had now a distinct occupation. Captain von Bolkenstern, my sincere friend, commanded my company, and as a preliminary I paid a sergeant of the company to teach me my exercise. A rather laughable incident occurred in reference to my drilling. As every vacant space was required to exercise the volunteers as well as the regular recruits, the court of my house was sometimes used for the purpose. An old woman who worked occasionally in the family happened to see how the drilling officer sometimes lost his patience with awkward youths,—how he seized the shoulders, pressed in the backs to expand the chest, poked the stomachs, and stuck a doubled fist under the chin to throw the head up. She had heard that I too was learning the exercise, and burst with loud wailings into my wife's presence, lamenting that I should have to undergo such treatment. My lot, however, was by no means so bad; my sergeant was very polite, though I cannot boast of being a handy recruit.

I could not, however, devote much time to these useful elements of my military education. I found endless and perplexing business in my office. A register had to be kept of every volunteer, specifying every personal particular. Many thousand volunteers came to me, and some generals who wanted volunteers to fill their detachments honored me with visits. I had besides no little trouble with the

young men, who all desired to join the guards, and who would with great difficulty be persuaded to belong to other corps.

A subject of dispute arose among those who had attached themselves to me. The young volunteers in other guard battalions had obtained permission to wear silver lace on the collar in the place of the white woollen which was worn by the regular men. The guard-chasseur company wore yellow lace, and the volunteers wished to be allowed to have it in gold. I must confess it was inconceivable to me how in such a moment of national enthusiasm the very weakest amongst the young men could think of such trifles; but Bolkenstern agreed with me in the propriety of decidedly refusing the pretension. I looked upon it as one of the most useful circumstances of the times, that the more educated classes should mix with those beneath them in rank and cultivation. I hoped that the higher influence would gradually improve the whole army, and we determined that the volunteers of the guard-chasseurs should wear the woollen lace, and in all respects throughout the war be on an equality with the common soldier. The press for admission was so great that we did not fear to have our ranks unfilled; some of the most high-born among the youths supported our views, and many who have since filled exalted stations will remember the dispute, and how warmly they declared in favor of our determination.

The Lützow corps was being formed at the same time in Breslau, and I was excited to friendly emu-

lation with Jahn, who was organizing his body of volunteers. His corps was most attractive to the youths of ardent disposition ; the very spirit of chivalry seemed to expand amongst them ; they were the poetry of the war, and their voice found noble utterance in Körner's lyre.

I had to manage for the clothing of the volunteers ; the funds for the purpose were supplied by the voluntary subscriptions which poured in from all parts of Prussia. It is well known how boundless was the emulation to outvie each other in splendid contributions. The miser offered up his worshipped board ; those who had not money sold their plate and jewels ; and many an anxious mother was seen to fit out and send to the war the son whom she had scarcely trusted from her sight. Common and pitiful feelings, such as will peep out to disfigure society in ordinary times, then scarcely dared to show themselves ; men high in station took their place beside the lowest ; superiors seemed willing to receive commands from those below them, when they, by longer service, were thought more capable ; the difference between giver and receiver seemed to have lost its former meaning ; and truly those who witnessed such displays of national virtue after a whole century of peace-engendered imperious bullying, must have seen that which seemed either a miracle or a fairy tale. To some of the poorer volunteers money had been given to provide their own outfits, and it happened sometimes that the small amount had been spent in drinking success to the common cause. I therefore determined henceforth

to give nothing but uniforms and military accoutrements. Workmen were employed night and day, and the commander of our battalion, Gen. von Jagow, proposed to me to equip with utmost speed fifty of the finest young men and present them to the king. The suggestion was complied with, though I would rather have avoided the display, in a wonderfully short time, and we received the royal permission to attend. The king received us in his palace. Amongst the volunteers were the poet Bürde and his three sons, all fine, tall men, who stood far above all the rest. Bürde had been secretary to Count von Haugwitz, and was not unknown to the king. The chief of the battalion alone was present; I was in civil costume, my uniform not being completed. The king received this first presentation of Prussian volunteers very graciously, and expressed himself to me in terms which I shall never forget. The audience was soon talked of, and as I did not return to my own house immediately, I found my door on my arrival there beset with carriages—it was men of consequence and generals, who came to congratulate me.

At length my transformation was to take place, and the process was by no means a pleasant one, bordering on the comic. The grave philosopher was to be changed into the raw second lieutenant. The little accomplishments which in youth are attained almost imperceptibly and are practised with ease were hard of attainment at my more advanced period of life; even the difference between my right hand and my left required reflection to remember,

and the perception arrived always too late. I hoped that time and practice might remedy this deficiency, but it clung to me to the last. I began and ended the clumsiest second lieutenant in the whole Prussian army.

Throughout all this preparation the alliance with Russia and the war with Napoleon were still undeclared. At length Baron von Stein arrived in Breslau with the news that Scharnhorst had met the Emperor Alexander at Kalish, and had there, on the twenty-seventh of February, concluded a treaty with Russia; but it was not until the sixteenth of March, almost six weeks after the royal command to take arms, that this treaty was communicated by Hardenberg to St. Marsan.

The Emperor Alexander's approaching arrival was announced, and the troops were ordered to line the streets for his reception. On this occasion I was on duty for the first time in my country's service. At four in the morning the detachment was paraded and marched to the suburb through which the Emperor was to enter. He was expected early in the morning; we waited in vain; the forenoon passed; we were all tired and hungry. Couriers brought news at last that the Emperor was still so distant that we might leave guard for half an hour. It was almost dark before he arrived. He was received with acclamations by the inhabitants; but the enthusiasm would have been livelier had not everybody been worn out by hunger and impatient waiting. Thus was I introduced to those minor duties

of the service which are little calculated to excite or support the spirits.

War was declared in Paris through the ambassador. General von York's demonstration was praised by the king, and became the universal theme of admiration. All the youth of Prussia were emulated by his example, when a most discouraging report arose. It was said that the enthusiastic love of liberty among the volunteer corps was disapproved in high quarters; it was considered extremely dangerous, and was to be restrained. They were not to act against Napoleon, but to be sent to Poland, where disturbances were expected, to protect the rear of the army. The exasperation may be conceived of young minds panting to be led against a hated foe, threatened, instead, to be used as a police force to coerce a people in whose cause they sympathized. Such intentions, however, if really formed, were not acted upon.

Our detachment was sent forward to Lissa. Bolkenstern and I were quartered in the fort, and my military life commenced. A grand review took place of the united corps of Blücher and Wittgenstein; it was my second public appearance as a Prussian officer. Bolkenstern worked very hard at teaching me to perform a salute. "When you are opposite the king," he said, "you must step forward with the — (I never can remember whether it was the right or the left) — foot and lower your sabre," and many more minute directions which I have forgotten. They were my undoing; for when the moment came I was absorbed in thinking over my lesson,

and my salute was so sad a bungle that Bolkenstern overwhelmed me with reproaches. Happily I had no more such ceremonies to perform, for, besides my inexpertness, my whole equipment was far from being a model of military perfection. The guard-chasseur uniform was very expensive, and consequently the gold epaulette did not grace my shoulder, nor was the schako, adorned with the black eagle, and the rich scarf, ever added.

The painful parting with my family had passed, and we moved on towards the enemy, who came to meet us with a rapidity which, after so disastrous a defeat, was truly admirable.

During our tedious delay in Lissa, and our march through Silesia and the Lausitz towards Dresden, we were enlivened by meeting Tettenborn's division, advancing towards Hamburg, and Dornberg's towards Lüneburg. I found Stein and Moritz Arndt in Dresden, where I remained a few days, relieved from the annoyances of military duty. It was my first personal introduction to the great German. I broke a lance with him, and my weapon was one which I knew better how to use than those which I had so lately assumed — it was a friendly strife, but an earnest one.

Stein was a man of deeds, not words, straightforward in action. He grasped and mastered every difficulty at the moment it arose, and he hated or pretended to hate speculation, and attacked me as a theorist. I was dining with him one day when only Moritz Arndt was present. "Your propositions," said he, "are mere subtleties — bare dogmas, calcu-

lated only to cripple every enterprising deed." "If," said I, "my speculations had not taken a practical turn, I should not have the honor to appear before you equipped as I now am; but the desire to realize all that is felt within, or apprehended by the senses, not according to outward semblance, but to the true spiritual import, is not the arbitrary whim of this person or of that, it is the moving-spring of the mind of Germany, and through this it is that my friend Schelling has so influenced the national character." "Yes," answered Stein, "I know well that the German youth are intoxicated with these vain theories; Germans have an unfortunate love for subtle reasoning; hence they neglect tangible good, and are the prey of every cunning enemy." "Your excellency," I said, "the German youth has risen in vast masses, yet many still hold back, and among those who do so, I will venture to assert, not one of the intoxicated theorists is to be found. Who has more effectually incited the people to rouse and arm than our two great masters of speculative philosophy, Fichte and Schleiermacher? Your excellency's time is too precious to be spent on subtleties which seem unpractical, but to me nothing seems more unpractical than to overlook a principle which you confess has become an element of the national mind."

I was almost frightened at my boldness. Stein grumbled rather angrily at first, but said smilingly afterwards, "Well, I am only an unpractical theorizer myself, wasting time in useless speculations on the views of others."

Mutual jealousies arose between the regular troops and the volunteers, whose unbridled ardor gave great offence. Many of those brought up in strict military discipline feared that the volunteer spirit would be a self-destructive element in the army, and held it their duty to keep it in continual check. Major von Z., who after Jagow's departure became chief of our battalion, had been General von York's adjutant during the Russian campaign, and was highly esteemed by him. He was notwithstanding one of those who thought the volunteers ought to be kept under, and he expressed his conviction not only when I had the honor of being his guest, but openly before the whole detachment. My unfortunate awkwardness, which was incomprehensible to him, called forth endless reflections upon useless, clumsy philosophers. On such occasions my position was not very flattering in the presence of my former disciples, among whom I was now the most stupid of the scholars; they supported me, however, on every occasion, and never failed to let me feel that they still remembered our former very different relation to each other.

Once in a village, the name of which has escaped my memory, a general advance was ordered. I was among the first who, after a hasty equipment, joined the major at the rendezvous, and was ordered to march with a small party in a certain direction before the village, in order to act as promptly as might be required on the approach of the enemy. I received no more particular orders. I ventured to inquire in which direction the enemy's approach

might be expected. "That you must find out," said the major, and I undertook the duty with much anxiety. I was utterly deficient in military experience, and was, as my friend Schall once called me in a poem, only a natural born soldier. I went with my small party in the appointed direction, judged as well as I could from very uncertain reports of the probable direction of the enemy, and posted two men on an eminence to reconnoitre, and behind them an advanced post, — whether they were too far off or too near I was wholly ignorant. The major came to review my position, and a storm then fell upon my unhappy head, which convinced me that I should not be able to continue that line of service. I was treated as the most incomparably stupid of human beings, the reproaches being varied by lively sallies on the uselessness of bookworms; in the course of these I was made answerable for all the trashy pamphlets of miserable authors which had been published since the subjugation of Prussia. "Where did you look for the enemy?" "There," I said, answering to the reports. "You should have expected them on the other side, — you ought to have known better." A large portion of the detachment were witness of this scene, including a number of my Breslau students. I had, as my rank required, received it all in silence, but later on the same day I waited on the major; he was more civil than before, and I sought neither to excuse myself nor complain of him, but represented that my position in regard to many in the detachment made it desirable for me to be appointed elsewhere, and

that, as General Scharnhorst had only intended me to be in it for a time, my removal would save the major the unpleasant duty of correcting me in the presence of my own pupils.

It was then late in April, and we were approaching Altenburg, where General Blücher had his headquarters. With Bolkenstern's consent I joined them. Scharnhorst presented me to Blücher, who wished me to remain unattached, and all was arranged, even to my being provided with a horse, which Scharnhorst kindly undertook for me.

I found Gneisenau as commandant of head-quarters, and Colonel von Müffling. The little town of Altenburg was in great excitement. The refugee king of Sweden, under the name of Colonel Gustavson, had lately arrived, and occasioned no small perplexity to the Prussian generals. It was very desirable to win over the then crown prince, Bernadotte, to join us, and it was plain that the exiled king hoped in secret to strengthen his own cause by the aid of Blücher and his generals, while he naturally expected that they would entertain no great partiality for the former French commander.

In the present important conjuncture, however, his absence was greatly to be desired, and that opinion was hardly concealed from him. I saw the thin, slender-looking king, one day, with his long, fair face, and the peculiar features of the ancient royal family strongly marked, standing at the door of a post-house. He wished to depart, and asked for horses; all were under requisition. It was perhaps right to refuse them without orders, but a stable-boy

did so in the most offensive manner, and I had the distress of seeing an anointed king, the descendant of Gustavus Vasa and of that Gustavus Adolphus whose memory should be sacred in Germany, ill-treated by a menial. The king — for he had never ceased to be one in my eyes — made no reply ; he turned away ; and though his history inspired me with more pity than respect, I thought there was something truly royal in his demeanor. I was with Colonel von Gerlach ; we both saluted him as he passed, and he received the compliment as a matter of course, and answered it with most kingly dignity.

Blücher was quartered at the Hotel Stadt Gotha. When I first joined the table there he was absent, with many of his officers. The Freemasons held a great meeting at Altenburg, and Blücher was the grand-master. His love for speech-making made the society attractive to him, and it is said that he obtained his remarkable facility in speaking at the Freemasons' lodge. He came to the hotel before the dinner ended, and the conversation seemed to indicate that the war was about to begin in earnest, and that an engagement was expected. News was repeated that the enemy were advancing from various quarters. Councils of war were held, and I enjoyed the excitement of feeling myself in the very centre of important operations ; my only perplexity was to wonder what sort of active service I could possibly perform.

One thing seemed certain, — that I was to remain for the whole of the war at Blücher's head-quarters.

It is most difficult to give a true description of that wonderful man, whose memory will live as long as the records of the war itself; he has been so often sketched that it is hard for many to divest the personal idea of him of many trifles unworthy of his greatness. His life, written by our great biographer, Varnhagen von Ense, is universally read, and deserves to be so.

Blücher might be called a phenomenon (*Incorekte Erscheinung*); there was a want of keeping in the parts of his character; yet this very eccentricity produced his greatness. In him all that was strange and incompatible in that wonderful war was represented; therefore it was as easy for his admirers to throw all other heroes in comparison with him into the shade, as for his dispraisers to describe him as a mere phantom. The severe moralist will find much in him to censure, yet he was the very centre of the moral impulse of the war. Compared with Napoleon, who invented a new system of military tactics, he cannot be called a great commander, yet in that character he won immortal fame. His speech was bold, like a rough, uncultivated soldier, yet sometimes it rose to such a pitch of eloquence as had been heard from no military hero of modern times; he obeyed the impulse of the moment, but the impulse was deep as it was quick; his perception was so vivid that he would see every difficulty in an instant and be dashed into despair; a few more instants and he would grasp the means of action, and fasten on his object with redoubled energy. That object was Napoleon's downfall. His hatred to the

tyrant mingled with the conviction that he was born to work his ruin, and he pursued his purpose as if led by an unerring instinct. He was a striking contrast to Napoleon. Napoleon studied all the phases of the revolution, and worked them out to the uses of his ambition, and he knew how to influence every ripple of the mighty stream which was to wash away the last traces of nationality. Blücher stood forth, a mighty nature, bearing the fire of youth in an aged but iron frame, destined to denounce the nothingness of the deepest scheming which was ever known in history.

The broken divisions of the beaten French army had to pass through a land inflamed with detestation, in order to join their reinforcements in their own territory. We must not deny the enemy full praise for the admirable tact and determination which they displayed under a calamity great enough to have overpowered an army of heroes. On their retreat a sort of preliminary war took place, which, compared with the great struggle in which all Europe was engaged, might be called an affair of outposts. The German legions, combined with the Russians, took advantage of the unfortunate position of the French retiring forces, and won successes which, at the time, were important. Dornberg's bold seizure of Lüneburg, and Tettenborn's occupation of the French city of Hamburg, were inspiring incidents, raising the hopes of Germany, as did the first great overt act of General von York at Königsberg. These triumphs had their value, but it was easy to perceive that the advantages could not

be supported, and it is too well known how dearly they were paid for in both cities, especially in Hamburg. In the mean time the masses were collecting which were to decide the tremendous contest. France felt that she had to fight for her existence, and the magical word, "the glory of the Great Nation," was as yet an unbroken spell. Napoleon was still to the French people their great leader, the conqueror of Europe, and the arming nations were rebels to his sway. Nature had for once joined to withstand him, and had triumphed for a moment; deprived of her aid, the resisting armies were again but the assemblage of so many easily to be re-conquered provinces. Holland, Belgium, Italy and the south of Germany still obeyed Napoleon, and trembled at the power of his name; Westphalia was yet nominally French, though she was united in heart to us; while Austria, though wavering, was still in alliance with France. Many discouraging circumstances hung over the united enterprise of Russia and Prussia. A mighty impulse, it is true, had called up a Prussian army with a truly wonderful celerity, but the organization was by no means complete, and time must elapse before any great force could be expected from Russia, distant as that country was, and exhausted by her late resistance.

This, then, was the state of Europe at the time when the new French army, issuing from their frontier, met the weakened forces returning from their Russian campaign; when a large division under General Wittgenstein, in conjunction with Blücher, prepared to meet the concentrated force of France.

In regard to my personal position I can only lament that I was as little qualified to be one of Blücher's staff as I had been for a second lieutenant. I was devoid of technical knowledge, and though all were kind to me, each had too many duties of his own to find time to enlighten my unhappy state of ignorance. My records of the campaign will therefore be wholly deficient in military detail, and the reader will be less disappointed if he will permit me to call them, not a history of the war, but sketches of my adventures on the road to Paris during the campaigns of 1813 and 1814.

## CHAPTER X.

STEFFENS'S MILITARY CAREER.—MY FIRST SIGHT OF WAR—"MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE"—GNEISENAU'S COURAGE AT GROSS-GÜRSCHEN—SCHARNHORST MORTALLY WOUNDED—BATTLE OF LEIPZIG—STEFFENS'S RESIGNATION AND RETURN TO BRESLAU.

BLUCHER had quitted Altenburg, and we all expected a general engagement. Late in the evening of the first of May, I sat in lonely expectation in a small cottage. Though much excited by the prospect of a battle, my spirits were anything but elated, and I must confess that some personal considerations helped to keep them down. I had, it is true, been removed from a painful position, yet my present was unpleasantly dubious. Scharnhorst had not found time to give me any orders, and for the first time in my life I was without the power of independent action, and yet found myself in a moment of general preparation not only without any appointed duty to perform, but doubtful, were I to be employed, whether I should aid or impede the cause. There was something cruelly humiliating in my situation, and the more enthusiastically I had anticipated the approaching contest, which had been the longing desire of so many years, the more wretched did I feel. I was pacing my little room with restless steps, when the sound of a galloping

horse's feet stopped suddenly at my door. The rider threw himself off, and gave me a letter from Scharnhorst. “Here at last are my orders; now have I a place and part in the important day.” I tore it open, and read as follows:—

“Dear Steffens:—I am sorry to be obliged to beg you to send me back the horse which I lent you. I lament that you will thus be prevented from appearing on the field of battle. It is the animal which I always ride on great occasions; and I fear that you will be obliged to remain in the rear to await, as I trust, the victorious issue of the day.”

I gave up the horse, and now I was in despair. If I were absent from the field I felt that I should be disgraced, and incapable of service for the rest of the campaign. I had heard the name of the village where the garde-chasseur battalion was posted. I set off, and by walking a mile joined it at last, though, having had some difficulty in finding a guide, it was nearly morning before I reached it. I called up the chief of the battalion, and begged him to put me in the way of obtaining a horse. I was conducted to a countryman, who at first stoutly resisted my demand, but at length produced one. It was a yellow chestnut, old, half-starved cart-horse; his ribs might be counted, and his hips stood up like the sharp sides of a rock. I climbed up to the miserable saddle, evidently the peasant's own manufacture, and after much effort the poor animal got its limbs set in motion. It was obstinate, and its mouth

was as hard as iron. No Prussian horseman ever cut so strange a figure. The knapsack which the guide had carried was fastened behind, and it was long before I got the clumsy beast into a trot. Which way to look for the field of battle I knew not; but as the day began to dawn I thought I perceived troops in the distance, though I was quite ignorant whether they were friend or foe. I rode forward, however, till I reached a large, open, gradually sloping field. Here I found a large body of Prussian infantry formed into line. How it took place I cannot tell, but suddenly I found my horse and myself in the very front, hindering the advance. An officer of rank, who must have been greatly astonished at the singular apparition, came up with angry looks, exclaiming, "What the d—— are you doing here?" General von York had been pointed out to me in Altenburg. I recognized him with dismay, while I made a desperate but for some time unavailing effort to induce my charger to retire from his position. I have but a confused impression of how I got out of the scrape. I only remember the sound of the general's scornful reproof. When I subsequently became well acquainted with him, and related the history of the disaster, he was highly entertained. After many inquiries and much riding backwards and forwards, I found Scharnhorst. He told me to remain near him, and ordered one of his adjutants to mount me on a baggage-horse. It was nearly noon, and the engagement began; but I had no idea whatever of the position either of our force or the enemy's. Cannonading was heard all round,

and the enemy seemed to be behind Gross-Görschen, but I could not perceive them.

I rode together with Gneisenau and the officers surrounding Blücher. The enemy stood before the houses of the village. A charge of cavalry was made on our side, and I suddenly found myself in the midst of a shower of balls. Prince Wilhelm's horse was shot dead under him. The charge was repulsed. Of how I got into the midst of it and how I got out again I can give no account whatever; only two things remained clear on my recollection. One was the sensation caused by the enemy's grape-shot. It seemed to me as if the balls came in thick masses on every side—as if I was in a heavy shower of rain without getting wet. Yet I cannot say that I was exactly overcome with fear; the impression was more strange and peculiar than alarming. The second object which distinctly impressed me was Prince William. He was then about thirty years of age, handsome in person, with the undaunted air which belonged to his royal race; and he was mounted on a splendid charger, which he managed perfectly. As he rode, smiling and composed, amidst the shower of balls, he seemed to me like a fair vision which I shall never forget. Gneisenau seemed quite joyfully in his element. Immediately after the attack he gave me a message to General Wittgenstein; and now began my darker part of the day. I rode forward, and looked about. That the battle was still raging near Gross-Görschen was proved by the tremendous cannonade of the enemy. I had no idea where to find Wittgenstein. Everything

round me seemed confused, and as if I was covered with a veil. I felt a tottering, a swimming, which sprang from my inmost soul, and increased every moment. I was plainly seized with a panic—the cannon fever. I found Wittgenstein notwithstanding, and delivered my message; and as I returned I met a detachment of my own volunteers, who as yet had taken no part in the engagement, but expected orders every instant to advance. I described to them under all the excitement of the moment exactly what I had seen and experienced. The young men listened with thirsting curiosity. It is well known how they distinguished themselves that day by their daring valor. When I rejoined Gneisenau all was in active engagement, every man knowing his duty and working hard in his appointed place. Nobody of course troubled themselves about me, and the feeling of my inability overwhelmed me, whilst I was obliged to stand there a mere useless looker-on. I perceived Scharnhorst carried wounded away. I had lost sight of Gneisenau. I was surrounded by strangers, and I found myself at last alone, with the enemy's balls howling around me.

There are several sorts of courage, as well as reasons for its failure. I was on the battle-field for the first time, not only without any distinct duty, but contrary to the orders of my commanding officer. To the consciousness of this I attribute the uncontrollable panic which seized me; yet I never entertained an idea of retiring from the scene; such a possibility did not once occur to me, and I managed

to collect my senses so as to observe what passed for the space of two hours. Sometimes the fight in and about Gross-Görschen came nearer to me, and I saw the Prussian cavalry exposed to the fire from the guns. I saw how their ranks thinned, and how, as here one and there another was unhorsed, with frightful wounds, the rest quietly closed up and filled the spaces. At length I found myself late in the evening again with Gneisenau, and close to the village. He, who must have noticed my agitation, was himself perfectly calm and cheerful, notwithstanding that the issue of the day was still uncertain. "Steffens," said he, turning to me, "is not that a grand cannonade? it is to celebrate your birthday." He had passed the last anniversary with me in my house; that he should remember and joke upon it at such a moment struck me as wonderful. As it became dark I joined Major von Schutz at a bivouac fire, and there heard of the advance of our cavalry, which attempted a charge against the enemy. That charge failed; and although we maintained possession of the field from which the enemy had withdrawn, it was determined that we should retire towards Pegau. I rode in the dark by the side of Schutz to the edge of a rather steep declivity by which our troops were marching in slow and perfect order, while other detachments were reposing by the bivouac fires, which lighted up the trees. The impression of such a scene, which afterwards became familiar to me, was at first very striking. We reached the little town in the middle of the night; it was crammed with troops, but we got a tolerable

lodging, and through intelligent officers who had been in the engagement I got some general insight into the events of the day and their results. This was most welcome; for hitherto all was mystery and confusion to my understanding. The object of the great contest, as it had engrossed me for so long, again rose clearly to my perception, and I felt convinced that I should not meet a second battle as I had done the first.

In spite of our retreat we looked on the affair as a success, for the troops had stood bravely against Napoleon, and a most valiant spirit pervaded the whole army. Satisfied with our position, and reconciled with myself, I slept.

On the third of May I joined Blücher in Borna, and found the troops in regular march, all in close order, as if going to meet an enemy; nothing betrayed the appearance of a retreat. Blücher had received a slight wound, but was in high spirits. Prince William was with him, and remembered that he had seen me early in the fight, and I received compliments which were far from being due to me, and which made me feel ashamed, though I trusted and believed that, had I been in the performance of some active duty, I should have found my courage much more manageable than it had been in my idle position.

For the first days the retreat was continued over a sandy level. Blücher was in the midst of the troops as they proceeded leisurely. The army was in such perfect order that many considered the retreat an unnecessary disgrace, and as this opinion

was rather boldly expressed, it came to Blücher's ears, who thought it necessary to address the troops about it. This was my first opportunity of admiring his astonishing eloquence. The substance of the speech is generally known, for it was published to appease the whole army, as well as to tranquillize the people. "You are right," I heard him say, "you are not beaten — you kept the field, and the enemy withdrew; their loss was greater than yours." And he then explained to them all his motives for not pushing on the battle, as well as those for retiring. I heard him repeat the same to various divisions as they came up; and while I praise the facility and noble simplicity of his expression, as well as the power of giving the same meaning in so many various forms, as often as he had to repeat it, I must confess there was something besides the words which gave such effect to the address, and that much was owing to the appearance and manner of the aged but powerful-looking man.

Early in the morning of the 16th of October I found myself at head-quarters near the village of Lindenthal. The day was bright and mild; it is remarkable that every engagement in which I have been present has taken place in the finest weather. Behind us lay a wood, before us an extensive plain. The enemy were posted towards Möckern, on which point we were advancing. The battle began, and we were already under a hot fire, when Gneisenau dispatched me to seek out the crown prince of Sweden, who held himself in the rear somewhere near Halle, and entreat him to advance without de-

lay with his Swedes. I had much trouble in finding him ; no one knew his exact position, and it was not till night that I made him out at Landsberg, in miserable quarters, surrounded by Swedish officers. He lay on a mattress spread on the floor of a desolate, nearly empty room ; the dark Gascon face, with the prominent nose and the retiring chin, was sharply relieved against the white bed-clothes and the laced nightcap. Gneisenau had explained to me fully the positions of both armies, and how the enemy, consisting of the choicest troops and the Imperial Guard, headed by Napoleon in person, were pressed back by us on Möckern, where the chief contest would take place. The crown prince listened attentively whilst I explained all this in my own language and his adjutant translated it to him. He then sat up in bed and made a very long speech, which concluded with a promise to march directly with his troops, and he dismissed me. Only half of Gneisenau's commission, however, was fulfilled. I had orders to mix among the Swedish soldiers, for he reckoned on my being able to make some impression on them through my native language. An opinion prevailed at head-quarters that the crown prince had no great liking to take part in a battle which threatened a signal overthrow to his own countrymen, and Gneisenau thought that I might rouse the ardor of the troops. I was to remind them of their great king Gustavus Adolphus, and of his glorious battle of Leipzig, and to urge that on the same field the fate of Germany was now to be decided, under our generals, as it had been then

under their great hero. I held all possible converse during the night with both men and officers, when I found that the order to march had preceded me. Many were already moving off, but some officers remained indolently looking on when all was ready, waiting for further orders. Talking with these, I perceived that the war had no national interest for the Swedes ; they could not see why they should be pressed into a struggle in which they were quite unconcerned, their country not being in danger ; the sacrifice was too hard upon the poor Swedes ; besides, the small force they could produce would be lost among the mass of nations now armed against Napoleon. I tried to persuade them that the renown of their leader would influence and strengthen the whole allied army. I cannot praise myself for this part of my argument ; I spoke it against my own conviction ; my German feelings gave the proud lie to this acknowledgment of superiority in a Frenchman ; indeed, we always held that the victory at Dennewitz was due alone to General Bülow. Nor had I much to boast of in the way of impression made upon the Swedes ; the elements of heroism were not in them, and my declamations on the scene of the approaching battle, and the great deeds there performed by their Gustavus Adolphus, did not help the cause much, for it had of late become rather the fashion in Sweden to disparage the merits of that hero.

Towards noon, however, the Swedish troops were all on the march, and as I learned that this was to be a day of rest, I gave my exhausted horse some

refreshment. It was dusk when I perceived the Prussian troops on a height near Möckern. I learnt then the issue of the engagement, which had been the fiercest of the whole campaign. It was usual with Gen. von York to be irresolute before he determined on an attack; once resolved, he ventured everything. The struggle before Möckern had been with Napoleon himself and his finest troops; he had offered battle; the victory was long doubtful; all the first engaged fell; new troops were continually brought up, and the final triumph was won by the reserve corps.

I found a party of the small remnant of Von York's division in a state of great depression. Evening prayers were being read; glorious as had been the victory, the dreadful loss filled every heart with sadness. It was there that, face to face with Napoleon, the Prussians had thirsted to redeem the shame of former times, and had rushed madly on the enemy. The account of the battle of Möckern as given from head-quarters was singularly short; it was contained in a few lines, and the heroism displayed, and the important consequences which promised to result from it, were scarcely noticed. On the second day, between that and the great battle of Leipzig, an attack of cavalry took place under General Wassiltschikof, which was duly praised. It was plainly intended to pass slightly over the Prussian exploits and to bring forward those of the allied Russians as much as possible. I inquired the way to Blücher's head-quarters, and rode towards it in the dusk over the field. After a few steps my horse

reared, I could not tell why ; my servant alighted and found a corpse in the way. I had to cross the field of battle, and could scarcely get on, the bodies lay so thick ; my horse, obliged to face it, left off shying after a time, and I only perceived that I was passing one of the slain by his quietly turning out of the way. I saw bivouac fires before me, but in the oppression of the scene I had forgotten my direction, and I doubted whether they belonged to our own troops or the enemy's; still I rode towards the fires ; living men, whether friends or foes, were welcome. I reached a wide road and recognized the Russians. Naked men appeared by the bivouac fires, who looked like giants against the brilliant light ; they were engaged in a curious process of purification,— they had taken off their shirts to pass them rapidly over the flames. I approached one to inquire where I should find Blücher ; he did not understand, but, cheered by the sound of voices, I rode on. I had passed the Russian fires and had been called to by a guard, whom I answered without taking much notice, when I heard a voice behind me, and understood the question, "Where are you going ?" I turned round and learnt that in a few more steps I should have heard the "qui vive ?" It was late at night ; our horses were quite tired out, myself the same ; so I thankfully accepted the invitation of a Russian artillery officer to pass the night in his company. The party were gathered round a gun. Hunger made a slight meal very acceptable, and though we heard skirmishings at the outposts we fell quietly to sleep.

At early dawn we received a morning salutation from the enemy in the form of some cannon-balls, which flew in high arches over our heads. The terrors of the evening, with the wild dreams of the night, vanished before the coming day, and the remembrance of the great stake which that day was to decide met me in all its power. Soldiers stretched at length round the fires were lying all round me, and as I proceeded I found them collecting more and more into groups, preparing for the expected battle.

Blücher's head-quarters were in the village of Möckern ; all were yet sleeping when I got there. It would convey a false idea of the scene in Blücher's vicinity were it to be supposed that anything like haste or confusion was to be perceived there. Though so great a battle was certain to be fought, though all felt that on its issue the fate of the whole war depended, there was yet no trace of any such important crisis near the great commander. Every officer rose and dressed himself leisurely and carefully ; the few washing utensils at command were taken to the wells, and when used by some were instantly claimed by the servants of others to be replenished. The windows were opened and laid back on the walls, to serve for looking-glasses. Coffee was brought in ; some drank from the cups and some from the saucers. Any little difficulty or accident was seized on to give a cheerful turn to the remarks, but these were never extended to the great event which was impending ; they spoke on indifferent subjects, even of gay recollections, and a joke

was seized on and passed round with thankful eagerness. To a superficial observer they might have seemed like men who were preparing to pursue a journey, and were amusing themselves with the little miseries of an uncomfortable night's lodging.

On that day we did not move out very early. Blücher had joined himself to General Langeron's division, and we found these preparing to pass the Parthe. On the other side of that river the ground rises ; there a wonderful spectacle presented itself.

Over the long, distant line of rising ground we beheld the French army in movement, and it soon covered the whole range of hills. It was the multitude bound to the man who had subdued the continent and ruled it so long by the terror of his name, now led by him to battle. The columns continued to emerge from the eastern horizon ; infantry, cavalry, and artillery glided along in order, and now and then the arms glanced in the newly-risen sunbeams. The whole army seemed like a mighty vision in a dream ; fresh hosts continued to rise in the east ; still they continued to vanish from our sight far to the west, as the great unbroken mass moved on and on. We stood long in breathless amazement ; then it was that Müffling gave the name to the approaching fight—he called it the great "Nations' battle" (Völkerschlacht) ; the name now belongs to history. We were posted on a plain many miles in extent ; troops were round us in every direction. General von York was fighting before Leipzig with the remains of his valiant corps. All around we heard the roar of fierce engagement, but we saw nothing, and re-

mained there stationary the greater part of the day ; while adjutants, who were constantly sent to the different corps, brought us back, every few minutes, reports of the progress of the fight from every point. More than 300,000 men were brought by the allies into the field ; 170,000 fought against us. Our ground, as I have said, was a large, open plain. Leipzig lay just before us in the distance. It was a strange day to me, passed in such perfect rest in the very centre of a great battle ; but the hours flew rapidly, the constant arrival of news kept us in such intense excitement. We heard that at Möckern the enemy had attacked Blücher's division, considering it justly as the centre point of the great moral strength of our whole army. Napoleon himself led on the attack ; he believed that any advantage gained over the most renowned of his enemies would help to subdue the spirits of the whole host. He then brought a half-dispirited army to meet an immensely superior force, yet his great mind had still power to animate his troops ; he knew the greatness of the stake. His soldiers fought as daringly as if sure of victory. I must pay the homage of admiration to a hero who made his effort for existence with such daring courage.

This battle also was fought under a brilliant sky. One of the scenes of that eventful day was striking. We discerned a large body of cavalry advance from the enemy's lines in perfect order. There were no troops immediately near the point they advanced upon, and we waited quietly for their coming up ; no doubt Blücher was advised of their in-

tentions. They proved to be the Saxon cavalry, who had left the enemy and come over to us. They stood looking resolved, but, as I thought, humbled before us. The commander came forward and approached Blücher, who received him with dignity. The Saxon officer stated that they had long waited for the moment when they might free themselves from the compulsion of bearing arms against their countrymen ; it had come at length. Yet they craved one indulgence : they wished *not* to fight in that battle. Their unhappy king was in Leipzig, in a house in the great market-place, which would soon be in our power. Blücher addressed them briefly, but very kindly, granted their request, and appointed them a position behind the army. I felt for them as they marched by ; I imagined all the distress of their position. But all the events of that day, from the first, when the great host passed before my wondering sight, up to that last scene, seemed like a splendid act in a Shakspearian drama, suddenly grown into a living truth.

Till now I had taken no part in the active duties of the day. Blücher, having dispatched all the rest of his staff, turned to me at last. "Mr. Professor," he said, "go instantly to General Langeron, take him orders to storm that village ; he must expect no help by reinforcement, but the enemy must be dislodged immediately." I hastened off ; there was no doubt of the direction I was to take. Langeron had been long disputing Schönfeld ; he had ~~been~~ been several times in possession of it, and the enemy had retaken it as often, and the flames of the burning village

showed me the way. I found him amongst the outermost houses; he was a stern-looking man with a commanding person. The enemy was again master of the greater part of the place. Surrounded by fires, the Russians were still fighting obstinately; it was a strange, exciting scene, friend and foe in fierce contest, lighted up by the raging flames. I delivered my orders. The general answered despondingly, "My men have fought for many hours, their numbers are thinned, they are tired and exhausted. I cannot withstand the enemy without support." I was compelled to tell him that he must expect no aid, and that the orders to take the place were peremptory. He reflected for one moment, and then gave the word of command for storming. Every man who was not at that moment actually engaged sprang forward from all sides instantly; the storming party rushed onwards with a loud cry; the enemy could not stand against it, and, the fortune of the day turning everywhere against them, they abandoned the village to the conquerors. I took part with the general in this attack, and when the village was in our power and the enemy in full retreat, I hastened back with the news to Blücher. At last I had been engaged. I had been a real sharer in the dangers of the day; but my duty had been so circumscribed, the moment of attack was so exciting, the struggle so short and decisive, that I had not been conscious of the danger till it was past. When I returned with the report to Blücher, he was already fully aware of the result; he had known it, in fact, sooner than Langeron himself, since from a

distance he had been able earlier to distinguish the retreating movement of the enemy.

I was again at our central position, at that point of rest where we had remained throughout the day. Accounts now came in thicker of the general and glorious result of the contest. Evening was coming on, and we left our post and advanced slowly towards Leipzig. Suddenly a loud cry, as from thousands of voices, resounded in the air; news came that our troops were pressing into the suburbs, and that the enemy were still defending themselves desperately in the streets and gardens. We galloped forward and were soon up with our fighting troops.

I received orders to join General Wassilschikof, who was appointed, with his cavalry, to pursue the flying enemy. I left the horrible distraction of the general fight and slaughter in the suburbs, and rode, as directed, to Skeuditz. I found that place full of Russian troops which had taken part in the day's conflict, and I was deafened, by certain German-speaking Russian officers, with histories of particular feats and combats. I was told there that a young Dane had fallen fighting valiantly, and learned with surprise and sorrow that his name was Oersted; he was the third and youngest brother of my celebrated countryman. I could not doubt that it was my friend, though I little expected to hear of him among the Russian army. His death was sad news to me. It was a strange transition in my feelings, strained as they had been to the highest pitch by national events of overwhelming interest, and thus suddenly thrown back into the closer and dearer

circle of private sympathy; thoughts sprang quickly up of quiet days gone by, of rest, and home, and friendship, all in painful contrast with the turmoil of the scene around me.

We received news of the flight of the enemy. Wassilschikof moved on early next morning from Skeuditz towards Markranstadt, and passed the night between the nineteenth and twentieth in the neighborhood of Lützen. Between that place and Weissenfels we came up with the last of the retiring army, and were then for the first time aware of the almost inconceivable results of the victory of Leipzig. I there witnessed what quite consoled me for having been obliged to join the Russians,—the extraordinary effectiveness of the Cossacks in harassing the rear of a flying army. The road to Weissenfels lies over a wide plain. We saw the last of the French troops before us; though in hasty flight, they kept tolerably good order. It was rather a misty morning, and there was nothing to be seen between us and the retreating enemy; all at once we perceived Cossacks in every direction, singly, or by twos or threes. In an instant they were joined into a troop, in another they were down upon the enemy. These consisted of the faint and weary, who were not able to keep up with the rest. The Cossacks rushed in between them and the main body, and they were instantaneously surrounded and cut off from it. The rear-guard paused a moment, turned, formed front without advancing, and began a rather brisk fire; but the distance was too great for it to reach us. The Cossacks and

their prisoners had disappeared, as if by magic; only here and there we could distinguish a single Cossack keeping watch upon the enemy. The retreating guard dared not linger for another fire; they turned their backs on us again and proceeded. This scene was often repeated — the sudden appearance of the Cossacks; the cutting off the lingering troops; the guard provoked to defend them, finding by the time they had faced us no object to receive their fire — was acted over and over again; and in the short distance between Lützen and Weissenfels General Wassilschikof took in this way two thousand prisoners, without any real skirmish taking place.

The fugitives hurried forward, and when we reached the suburbs of Weissenfels we found the town occupied by the French; we saw them in the act of passing the Saale by a bridge of boats. Blücher and his staff appeared at this moment. I joined him, and we mounted the heights behind the town, which run parallel with the river. The enemy had just time to withdraw their floating-bridge, and they drew up on the other side of the river opposite to us.

We gave them a heavy cannonade from our heights. The mist cleared off; the bridge of boats which was constructed on our side soon reached across the stream, and the enemy, who then took to flight in great disorder, could not hinder our troops from landing. This was not the only affair during the pursuit. They were constantly attacked, and fled faster and faster; and, as we followed them

from Weissenfels to Freiberg, we witnessed fearful traces of the general consternation. I shall never forget the sight. Weapons thrown away to lighten their speed; guns, ammunition-wagons, carriages of all descriptions, even some handsome travelling equipages,—plainly abandoned because the tired horses could no longer draw them,—remained in close confusion, not only on the road, but in the fields, as far as the eye could reach in the direction of the flight. The way was often quite impassable, and we had to make considerable circuits to get on. The enemy themselves had entirely disappeared, at least I saw not one.

When we reached Freiberg we learnt that Napoleon had remained there some hours; it was said that he had been seen at a window, his head resting on his arm in silent despair. Berthier sat opposite to him in a similar state. Neither spoke, and officers who entered were silently ordered, by a wave of the hand, to leave the room. The inhabitants were full of anecdotes to prove the desponding state of the flying foe.

Under the idea that Napoleon would try to maintain a position, if only for a short time, at Erfurt, Blücher abandoned the immediate pursuit in order to cross over by Langensalza towards Eisenach, and so intercept him. This proved a mistake. Napoleon's loss at Leipzig had been so great that he could not feel safe till he reached the other side of the Rhine. We made continual marches, tedious from their uniformity. That part of the route between Eisenach and Fulda was remarkable as dis-

playing frightful traces of the defeat which the enemy had suffered. The rapidity of their flight had completely exhausted the greater part of the army. We saw at first single Frenchmen lying among the bushes; as we proceeded the number of the exhausted, dying sufferers increased, and we found large groups of dead and dying. It was painful to me to observe that they looked upon it as a greater evil to be discovered by us, though we offered them assistance, than to be left to perish with hunger and exhaustion amongst the under-wood. I confess I wished myself away from the horrid scene; it was more terrible to me than the violence of the fiercest battle.

Many letters fell into our hands of French correspondence, as well as some from Germans to the French; they sometimes furnished us with useful intelligence, but oftener related to private histories. Not a few tales of scandal came thus to light; and we read the tender sorrows of German ladies whose French lovers were compelled to depart to meet the dangers of the war. I felt ashamed at the way these disgraceful liaisons were paraded for the general amusement. Another booty fell into our hands which entertained us — a great number of Westphalian orders, which had been sent to decorate the brave victors in expected fields of glory. The conquerors had vanished, and the symbols of their triumphs fell to our share; as for the kingdom of Westphalia, we regarded it as a ghost which was already laid.

When the Emperor Napoleon abdicated and was

sent to Elba, I petitioned the king to grant me my release from military service; and as soon as the first credible reports of Napoleon's dethronement became general, I sent for a tailor to make my outer man myself again. I can hardly describe my sense of freedom when I put off my uniform; the long-worn dress was hateful to me, however I may have been honored in the right to wear it. All my linen was sent to a swimming-bath in the Seine, and I felt as if I were born again.

My petition received the following answer:—

“ Since it appears to me that you will now more effectually serve the state by returning to your scientific appointment than by continuing longer in your present position in the army, I grant your petition to be released from military service, and together with this discharge I join my assurance that I acknowledge with thanks the patriotic self-sacrifice with which you laudably preceded your fellow-citizens in the hour of danger.

“ FREDERICK WILHELM.

“ H. Q., Paris, May 5th, 1814.”

Blücher with some of his officers was preparing to go to London, and he proposed to me to accompany him. I was truly grieved to be obliged to decline this most kind offer. My circumstances would not permit the great expense which I must have incurred to ~~have~~ appeared in the midst of military splendor in that luxurious city. I therefore parted from Blücher, Gneisenau, and all the kind

friends who surrounded them. As I took leave of them, the events which I had seen in the company of those great men swept before my thoughts in all their historical importance, and I was deeply affected.

At my request the minister of state had supplied me with a courier passport and sum of money to defray my journey. I might have returned with the army, but my earnest longing to rejoin my family, and resume my quiet academic duties, increased daily, and prompted me to determine on an immediate departure. I must not omit to record my last dilemma. My passport had been made out to "The Second Lieutenant and Professor Dr. Steffens." I protested against the arrangement of these titles. I represented that I must stand by my real profession, and not that which I had only provisionally followed. I asked my kind friend who made out the passport whether, supposing the title of second lieutenant to be superior, I could in future designate myself Mr. Second Lieutenant without disparaging my academic office. After much discussion on the point, I made a proposal which would avoid the question of the precedence of my two characters, that instead of Mr. Second Lieutenant and Professor, etc. etc., I should be styled Second Lieutenant Mr. Professor, etc. etc. This was adopted, and the difficulty happily obviated.

## CHAPTER XI.

LABORS IN BRESLAU—AVERSION OF NATURALISTS TO METAPHYSICS—NEANDER—PLATONIC ATTACHMENTS—JACOBI—FRANTZ RAADER—STEFFENS'S PROFESSORIAL LIFE AT BRESLAU—RAHEL, WIFE OF VARNHAGEN VON ENSE—BETTINA VON ARMIN—DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ—STEFFENS'S RELIGIOUS FAITH—THEOLOGICAL INQUIRIES—TRANSFER TO BERLIN—CONCLUSION.

THE work which absorbed my chief powers at Breslau, after my return to my professorial duties, was the development of a complete philosophy of nature. Such a science had swam before my mind from my earliest youth, although it had at first been in an undefined form. The defined and scientific form had been given to these vague dreamings by Schelling. It were an idle question whether my ideas would have taken shape had it not been for Schelling. I hate such questions; they are absurd. How ridiculously would a physiologist appear if he were to base elaborate investigations on the question what the human organization would have been had the heart been placed on the right instead of on the left side. The first steps in my inquiries were my own; I could not stop in them, and had to follow, lead me where they would. I felt myself, while in Breslau, banished in truth from the scientific world; but I was faithful in all my labors, and successful in stimulating young minds. I had gone far enough

to see that the philosophy of nature is an independent science, that it must form itself connectedly with and yet separated from every other department of knowledge. My task was not to plunge into all the details of empirical inquiry, much less to feel bound to follow all the departments of experimental science to their latest discovered results. It has been charged upon me that I considered myself competent to master all these things ; but such a charge is untrue. Yet it is true that I was a patient inquirer into every department of physical science, and that my interest in what is experimental was so great that when the University of Berlin was established I did hope to be transferred thither. I was forty years old,—just in my prime. I had to wait till I was an old man before I was transferred to the metropolis. Let it not be inferred that while the philosophy of nature had my whole heart, I did not know what relations I held to experimental science.

Naturalists as a class will have nothing to do with metaphysics ; they deny in toto that there is any tendency in empirical science towards speculative science, and if they once had youthful dreams which were tinged with philosophical abstractions, they forswear them utterly when they come to enter upon their engrossing labors ; their views gradually become definite, single, fixed, and the prospect of making new discoveries is so attractive as to wholly absorb them.

But the abstract philosopher will have just as little to do with empirical science ; you may often hear him speak depreciatingly of it. The natu-

ralists may indeed be in search of laws through the pathway of experiment, but a response from the world of law does not come in obedience to their manipulations. Schelling had indeed laid a permanent foundation to the new science of the philosophy of nature, but he was now silent on this subject, and was pursuing other departments of thought which were more attractive, and in which his great mind could find freer play. Many of the younger scholars were distinguished zoologists, botanists, mineralogists and geologists, and if speculative philosophy interested the youth, yet it was in the guise of a completely abstract, formal network, in which man would ensnare nature, not as a living and animating spirit which leaps forth and struggles even to comprehend itself. I cannot say that I ever pledged my allegiance to Schelling, for he was my master, and ruled me whether I would or not. One cannot speak of pledging loyalty where treason is impossible.

I knew my own true position well; it never fell to my lot to be led by any cabal; I did not believe in such things, and looked at them to overlook them, just as the mathematician does with infinitely small quantities. Not that I took this good-natured view from any want of experience; on the other hand, it has been formed in defiance of experience. And so, relying on myself alone, rather than upon the help of powerful friends, I was surprised at the manifest tokens of public favor displayed towards me. Often in my old age I have wondered at finding myself a professor in a German university. The

complexity of organization which is found in these institutions is so great as to be completely unintelligible to a mere observer, and tends to make one feel that he has passed out of consciousness into a dream.

Let it not be thought that through this clear knowledge of my own position I was troubled on account of the nature of my employments. I sought in every way to guard myself against self-deception, and to accustom myself to my isolated position in Breslau, for that position had its good side. I had indeed passed the period of my ripest maturity, but the glow of youth and the inclination to test by experience every subject of my thought would not leave me. If one looks over the whole course of my life he will see that I was less able than many are to withdraw myself from the circle in which I had lived. The present and future condition of Germany interested me just as much as my own observations of nature.

While I was professor at Breslau, a chronic complaint in the stomach led me to try the waters of Carlsbad. I spent six weeks at those mineral springs — six weeks which passed away very quickly and pleasantly. Among the invalids whom I met there, the most eminent was Professor Neander, whom I first knew as one of my audience at Halle. Even when a student there he lived the life of a recluse. He was remarkably reticent, and did not have many acquaintances. I only saw him in the lecture-room, but I knew well that his was one of the best minds among my hearers. The students generally formed

very correct judgments of one another, and they regarded this reserved, silent, awkward young man with a kind of timid awe ; they knew what he was, and what the world had to expect of him. I was rejoiced to meet him at Carlsbad. During the time spent at the springs I talked almost exclusively with him, and I shall not forget how rich his conversation was. He spoke mostly on religious subjects, but in a most instructive manner. His disease was not without danger, and he only kept himself in working condition by a most self-denying, simple and rigid life. He was accompanied by a devoted sister. The gentleness and the entire affection of this sister was very touching, and showed itself in the extreme accuracy with which she took care that he should follow the physician's charge regarding the times of drinking the water from the springs. The hours which I spent with Neander at Carlsbad I shall not forget, for I gladly became a pupil of him who had once been mine. Yet I missed there two frequenters of the place,—Goethe was away, Werner was dead.

On my way from Carlsbad to Breslau, I tarried some time at Munich, which was then as great a centre of intellect as it now is of art. I saw Schelling again there, for the first time after fourteen years, and by him I was made acquainted with Sailer, the mystic, and with many other men of eminence. He brought me also in contact with Jacobi, whom I had long wished to know. In the later years of the last century there had been forming under the influence of Lavater, Claudius, and Hamann,

a deeper spirit of religious inquiry, combining the mystical with the theological. As a consequence of their efforts there had arisen a circle who gave to their letters and conversations a certain platonic cast of expression. There were ladies of high rank who took a deep interest in this: such were Sophia de Laroche, Goethe's sister, the princess Gallitzin, and Jacobi's sister, Lena. Jacobi himself was the real, living centre of it all. He loved to assemble gifted women around him and stimulate their powers; and in his romance of Waldemar he tried, in most perfect innocence of intention, to make this new bigamy attractive. A pure platonic marriage was, according to him, a sign of high spiritual development; and such was his personal influence, that although his theory of this double marriage, that of the spirit for pure spiritual growth, having no relation to sex, and that of the body for the mere purpose of propagating the race, was never able quite to convince the ladies of its truth, yet he was able to gather around him a platonic academy, not unlike that once assembled at Florence. That in this circle Goethe was rather wondered at than honored, may be supposed; that violent controversies sprang up within it, was to be expected. Frederick Stolberg's conversion to Catholicism made a great stir within it, although the reason of his action was very apparent; and Jacobi's style of writing, I may remark, is only intelligible to one who knows that it takes its form from the style of his conversation with those who formed his platonic circle.

Jacobi was the chief figure in this circle, and he was learned enough to pass for a genuine philosopher. He attacked the French with amiable gentleness for their want of the religious faculty, and this with perfect comprehension of their deficiency, for he had been brought up among them. Hume and Locke were favorites with him, and for the reason that, while they did not satisfy him, they gave him free play for all his speculations. Kant was not a favorite with him. Kant's earnestness, his rigid dialectics, and his clearness, were as unacceptable to Jacobi as the strict method of Spinoza. He indeed thought himself competent to be an opponent of Kant; and it is not to be denied that Jacobi had a talent at suspecting where truth lay, and of speculating upon it, which was his justification in opposing Kant; and yet what the latter only made more narrow and limited, and kept in a smaller field than before, the former, by his want of clearness of perception, only made more obscure.

Jacobi was poet enough to give the charm of style to his speculations, and the back-ground of philosophic thought was not an unhappy means of displaying the finish of his rhetoric. The Letters of Allwill, as well as Waldemar, cannot be compared with any other productions of his time; the mark of a womanly nature which they bore formed, artistically speaking, the characteristic of his conceptions, and formed an interesting precursor of that genuine womanly power which gave him at a later day his sweetness, richness, and variety.

I found Schelling perfectly justified for his sever-

ity towards Jacobi. He had written of the latter with great power and keenness, but he could not do less. I told Schelling of my relations to Jacobi. "You must visit him," he answered; "it would be wrong to let pass an opportunity to meet a man who has played a grand part on the role of our national literature." So I visited him, and found him with his sister, who lived for him, giving herself wholly to the duty of caring for him. Rigidly as I judged the philosopher and the author, little as I felt drawn to him at any epoch of my life, or could resolve to go with him on his way, yet there was in him an element so genuinely human that I could not overlook it, nor could I forget that it was he who first interested me in speculative philosophy by making me acquainted with Spinoza. I once believed that he who called my attention to Jordanus Brunus, and who himself seemed to penetrate to what was deepest in Leibnitz, had been appointed to exercise a deep influence upon his times. The times had not been all that I expected, or rather they had demanded a mightier man than he to meet their exigencies; and yet I could not see his sun sadly setting in his old age without a certain tinge of sadness.

Jacobi was slim and graceful; in his youth he must have been handsome. He appeared to me more as a finished gentleman than as a scholar; his bearing was high-bred, even with a touch of diplomatic manners; his features were very expressive, and there was grace in his every motion. His dress was very rich and carefully made up; it even

seemed as though he bestowed too much attention to this matter, considering his age and his profession. When I entered his room he received me with great cordiality, and I approached him with an emotion which I could not repress. He called forth, I confess, my pity and my respect; I could see that there was a man who had known by experience what it is to bear sickness and sorrow.

Jacobi had some paper of mine lying before him. It is well known that his habit was of noting down his comments of whatever he read, whether in approval or criticism, and by the abundance of these marginal notes on my production it was plain with what care he had read it. I knew well that he would not be displeased with it, for he was alluded to in the paper in a very kind way. It could not but be grateful to him to be handsomely spoken of by Schelling's warmest friend and closest adherent. But what pleased me in the interview was not so much his spirit as that of his sister, and the affectionate manner in which she clung to him. For a long series of years Lena had lived one life with him, had taken part in all his studies, had shared in all his disputation, had changed the still self-communion of that retired man into a long conversation, and had even ennobled and exalted her brother by her presence. The spectacle of this rare attachment was very beautiful. He was trustful and mild; she devoted, calm, and happy.

It was my good fortune to make another interesting acquaintance in Munich. This was Frantz Baauder. He stood so aloof from society, so signally iso-

lated, that people looked at him with different eyes from those with which they regarded other people. In South Germany there had existed a mystic school for some time. It had, since the advent of Mesmer, espoused magnetism as its pet theory, and its members extended even into Switzerland. They stood, if I mistake not, in intimate relations with the mystics of South France, Saint Martin, and others, and Frantz Baader had in his youth been closely connected with eminent men of this school. Among all those mystics he was the most genial, as well as the most thoroughgoing. He was always publishing little pamphlets, some of them of great interest; the title of one I remember; it was *The Lightning Father of the Light*. This title itself might have served as the motto of all his writings. I had had some correspondence with him before I came to Munich, and had the strongest curiosity to meet him. I had been thought to resemble him in appearance, and this only sharpened my desire to see him.

So I called upon Frantz Baader. He was just on the point of going out. His figure surprised me, for it was not what I had expected. He was quite slim; very active, and his countenance was that of a man who had apparently seen much of the world. This appearance passed away when I came to know him more fully. He received me with great cordiality, and invited me to accompany him on a walk. We soon found topics of conversation. Expressions indicating deep thought were interspersed with dashing witticisms. He talked incessantly; and when a subject of special interest engaged him, he

would stop in the midst of the mud in the street and deliver, in a high, excited tone, a kind of off-hand lecture. The passers-by seemed to know him, and paid little attention to him. He joked incessantly, and yet every now and then he would drop a wise remark, so that at last I felt fairly bewitched with his talk. I remember one remark which he made in the midst of this incessant play of fireworks. We were talking of Goethe. "Yes," he said, "this poet is in truth the Lucky Hen of our times, but she has hatched a brood of ducks, which swims securely, while the old hen stands fearfully cackling by the water-side." Afterwards he used to have his witticisms printed in the papers. When I was in Munich in 1837, before I had called upon him, he waited upon me at the hotel. As soon as he had entered my room, before he had hardly greeted my wife and daughter, he plunged his hand into his pocket and pulled out a mass of paper fragments on which his witticisms were printed. I remember only one of them. The cholera had thrown Rome into dismay, and the Pope had withdrawn to St. Angelo. "What will become of the Catholic Church," so ran the witticism, "now that the Pope has excommunicated himself?" Baader's own relation to the church was a very changing one in his later years.

When I left Munich in 1817 he was thinking of nothing else than the formation of a great ecclesiastical union. He had outlived then, if I remember rightly, the time when mesmerism was his hobby; now he was busied with the thought of uniting the

three great churches, the Catholic, Greek, and Protestant. The Catholic and Protestant Churches form, he held, a complete antagonism, which was always becoming more confirmed. The mystic triangle would only be formed by the admission of the Greek Church. He thought that he could interest the Russian emperor, Alexander, in his plan. In conjunction with a friend, he resolved to make a journey to Russia to accomplish this undertaking. How little he comprehended the scope of his proposed work, he very poorly understood, but he learned it at length. He had come to a powerful country, which was entirely new to him, and expected to be able to influence its monarch. Fortunately he was persuaded to relinquish his plan and to turn back at Riga. He afterwards became a very determined antagonist of the Catholics, and showed in his own experience the truth of his assertion, that in case there were no union between the three great churches of Christendom, the one of south-western Europe would divide against itself. It is singular that the plan of a union, which, if it were a true one, would unite the most conflicting elements of society, should emanate from a man whose disunited nature made him remarkable among the men of his time. He was, taken as a whole, one of the marked men of the age, though he was comprehended but by a few. He felt that Jacob Böhme, the mystic, was the grandest soul which Germany had produced, and that it was his own mission to reveal his greatness to the world, and although few knew Böhme's writings so intimately as he, yet he

died at last, at a ripe old age, without having written any adequate exposition of him whom he was glad to hail as his master.

My life at Breslau was unmarked by great events. In 1821 I was elected rector of the university, and endeavored to discharge faithfully the duties of that post. My time was devoted to the preparation of my lectures, to social gatherings, to the writing of my book on Geology, and the various novels with which I amused myself in my leisure hours, and enlarged the circle of my activities. The latter received much applause, and brought me into intimate relations with many eminent personages. Yet my life at Breslau, protracted as it was until 1832, became dull and formal, and during the last seven years of it I felt a strong conviction that my meridian day had passed, and that I had entered upon the period of decline. That I, an old man, should write novels, brought upon me a great deal of ridicule; but they amused me, and I let the world laugh on. I was moderately successful as a lecturer. I had not a large number of students, but among them there were some of promise, while among the professors there were a few men of mark and power. After Raumer had been transferred to Berlin, the department of mineralogy passed over to me, and the charge of the cabinet became a part of my duties. So my time was fully occupied. During the vacations I made little tours with my wife and family to the most attractive parts of Germany, and always came back refreshed to my labors. I received while at Breslau distinguished honors from

the king of Denmark, who invited me to Berlin to attend him in his visits to the objects of interest in that city while he was the guest of the king of Prussia ; and the young prince, afterwards Frederick William the Fourth, showed me much honor on the occasion of his tour through the mountains of Silesia, at which time I was designated as the director of the royal party in its excursion.

The great advantage which I gained from my novel-writing was that it threw me into the most intimate relations with some of the most gifted women of my time. I am not easily able to express what I owe to the stimulating powers of some noble minds of this sex ; but it is true that the time of my making their acquaintance was an epoch in my life. I may allude very especially to two, Rahel von Varnhagen and Bettina von Arnim. With the former I had been for some time acquainted. The most marked of my former hearers, who left Halle in 1806 and went to Berlin, collected themselves around Rahel, and she became the wife of one of them. As an authoress she was always sententious, and she carried this manner into all her conversation. She was invariably occupied with the weightiest subjects, and, although an authoress, yet still more a woman. She was never the disciple of any man, although she was a hearer of Fichte's lectures. Great ideas were always thronging in upon her mind ; these were sometimes unexpressed, and sometimes they found utterance in her writings and in her conversation. That which she could find no expression for, she used to personify in two men

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of her time, and all that was akin to life she ascribed to Goethe, all that was akin to wisdom she ascribed to Fichte. Nor did her adoration of these men spring from an objective appreciation of the part which they played in the age, it was rather the giving of her whole being to them; she saw herself reflected in them as a true wife sees herself reflected in her husband. She did not come to it by comparing Goethe with other poets, nor Fichte with other philosophers; her view was an entirely independent one; and just as a true wife stands more securely in her own strength when she gives herself exclusively to her husband, so Rahel was the more independent in her own judgment because she measured her thoughts by those two gigantic standards.

With Bettina von Arnim my relations were of an entirely different sort. Clemens Brentano, her brother, was one of my first acquaintances in Germany. Achim von Arnim, her husband, I had met years before in Halle. There were epochs in my life when my intimacy with her was not without value to my mental development. Her rich, peculiar, rare, but unbridled fancy charmed me. I yielded myself wholly to it; we wandered together into the most distant regions, and I returned from such excursions as unwillingly as one would awake from a pleasant dream. Thoughts swift as lightning ran through my mind while under the spell of this delightful enchantment, and a thousand visions were formed which did not wholly pass away when I returned to my colder moods. After she became

an authoress I saw less of her, and, indeed, our views of life drew us widely apart. And yet, though my intimacy with her looks now like a dream, yet it afforded me some of the richest hours of my life.

Among the gifted writers with whom I became acquainted, I ought not to pass over the wife of de la Motte Fouqué. Her husband I had first met after the war. He had the ability to ingratiate himself at once into confidence; and when I first met him at a party, during a conversation on all kinds of subjects, he drew me to a window. One of my expressions had pleased him, and I was not a little surprised to hear him say, "Steffens, that is spoken as it were out of my own soul; we must know each other better." He embraced me, and continued to address me with the confidential *Thou*. Thus, while myself an old man, I had gained a new friend in a manner truly romantic. I have never been able to think without sadness of the declining days of this poet, who gained a not insignificant reputation. His first wife gave me her confidence in all matters of literature. Yet I confess that she passed away before I had fully grasped the range of her capabilities.

During my last years in Halle, and while I lived in Breslau, my interest in religion made great advances. I had till then felt no inclination to join the church, and, indeed, I was wholly estranged from its interests. Looking at religion as I looked at nature, I saw that it must be everything or nothing to me; but it seemed to me to have come to no positive statement, and seemed little else than a product of esteem among those who are friends. Whoever

had the good fortune to live in intimate relations with Schleiermacher, whoever has known the thoroughly noble, pure, tranquil, and tranquillizing spirit which he always carried, will understand how one who should associate with him would find it difficult to discriminate between his religion and his manliness. Later in life I learned that a reviving of church-spirit was one of the signs of the times. It cannot be denied that when one looks at the religious character of the German nation during the past two centuries, this period of transition seems of special advantage. Bunsen was the pioneer in developing the history of sacred music through the successive steps of the Protestant church. In his researches it may easily be seen how our hymns have gradually lost an indefinite tone and have assumed a personal character, as if speaking out the praises and aspirations of the individual heart. This indicates a change of feeling which, beginning with learned men, reached out at last and affected the whole popular heart.

I need not enter into all the thoughts which engaged my attention as I turned seriously to this great topic of religion. The question which most nearly concerned me was, Must I, in order to become a Christian in the full sense of the word, necessarily become a theologian? Must I give up the studies to which I seemed to be specially adapted, and enter in my old age upon a course of inquiries for which I had no natural inclination? Few men, I think, have contended as earnestly within themselves as I did while settling this battle. A

Protestant was I with my whole soul; yet I must confess that Protestantism as it existed then seemed to have called forth a conflict which it had not settled. And so I was given over to all kinds of doubts. Still, I was convinced that religion was not mere speculation, it was not philosophy; this was ideal and subjective; but religion must be objective truth, having the same relation to the soul and its wants that nature had to scientific investigations. Like nature, it was a gift of God, and it must be known and become real to the consciousness.

It is impossible for me to express the value that Schleiermacher was to me in those days; my relation to him was the most charming feature of my early life. His personal weight of character was so great that he had an influence on the superficiality of Berlin greater than any other, and his funeral obsequies were celebrated by the most remarkable display of affection and reverence that Berlin has ever witnessed. And while we were together he strengthened me beyond measure, and formed the centre of all friendly gatherings. The three Calvinistic preachers of Halle were intimate with Schleiermacher, and so, while I did not fully understand all their statements of doctrine, I was united to them and him in truly Christian sympathy.

My thoughts were directed to the subject of theology and the church during the later years of my career at Breslau, and had a decisive interest over the future of my life. By degrees I became attached to the old Lutheran faith and symbols, and an avowed supporter of the Lutheran party. I united with

their church, and continued in full fellowship with it, and the pamphlets which I put forth in defence of it contribute no slight portion of my published writings. But I met with great opposition, and from none more than from my coadjutors at Breslau. There is little need that I should dwell on the bitterness which grew out of this. Enough to say that all my later years there were saddened by theological asperities, and that at last I longed to be removed to some other field of labor, where, in quiet and with an income equal to my moderate wants, I might pass a tranquil old age. I had then nearly reached my sixtieth year. I had passed over twenty years at Breslau, and had many ties which bound me there, but not so many as to offset the bitterness which sprung from the theological position which I had taken. It was preëminently the time for exaggerated church feeling. The king, Frederick William Third, was devoting much attention to his plan of union; in fact the formation of a new church on the basis of the united Lutheran and Calvinistic churches was the absorbing subject of his thoughts, and the crown prince was scarcely less interested than he. The country was awake with an ecclesiastical spirit which had hardly been known since the days of the Reformation.

Under these circumstances, while I had in my earnest advocacy of the Lutheran cause estranged many able and influential men from my interests, the personal favor of the crown prince placed me at once in complete possession of what I desired, and procured me a call to the University of Berlin.

This was in 1832. There was no place which I so much desired as a home as Berlin. Königsberg seemed to be out of the world; and Bonn, although desirable on many accounts, was not to be compared with the great Prussian capital. And yet my manner of thinking was radically unlike that of Berlin; the empirical school had there complete sway, and Hegel's exact method had no rival. The reception, therefore, given to a disciple of Schelling could not be cordial, and much as I felicitated myself on my transfer, yet I did not expect immediate success, and was not disappointed at not meeting it. The subjects on which I lecture are comparative physiology, psychology, geology, the philosophy of religion, those on psychology being the most largely attended. My room has never been thronged, yet I have been gratified in drawing around me not only an unusually large number of foreigners, Englishmen, Poles, Russians, Greeks, and Americans, but in winning the confidence and attachment of some young men of rare promise. Since my transfer to Berlin I have been elected rector of the university, and have sought to administer that trust as impartially as at Breslau. On the whole I have passed ten pleasant years here, and my old age is drawing to a tranquil end. It is a great consolation to me that my own king now regards me with so great favor, that my Danish fellow-subjects look upon my career with pride and upon me with honor, and that in my little journeys to Denmark, and to Norway and Sweden, I have received attentions which I wish were better deserved. The preparation of

my Autobiography has been one of the recreations of my declining years, for it is not without pleasure that I have gone back into the valley of past years, reviewed the scenes and the hopes of youth and early manhood, and recalled the faces and the characters of those whom I have known and loved. Mine has been an eventful life and passed in eventful days, and I trust that its story has not been a mere recreation to an old man, but to many a reader who loves the social and the scholarly life of Germany.

**THE END.**

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